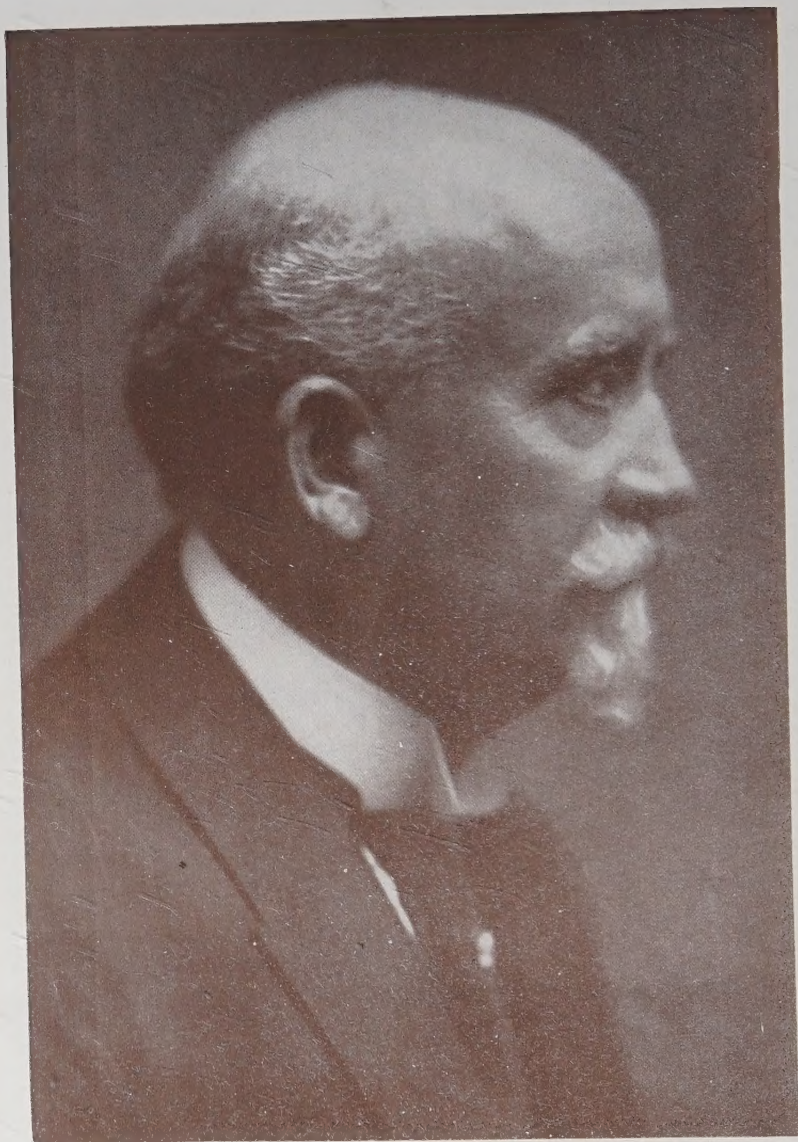




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THE MAKING OF
NEW GERMANY



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PORTRAIT OF SCHEIDEMANN

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

THE MEMOIRS OF
PHILIPP SCHEIDEMANN

Translated by J. E. Michell

VOLUME II



ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. STOCKHOLM	I
II. REFORM AND PEACE WORK	18
The Peace Resolution. The New Man. Text of the Peace Resolution. "As I Understand It." A Meeting with the Kaiser. Interludes. Michaelis and the Pope's Note. A Sitting of the Committee of Seven. A Talk with Kühlmann. Sitting of the Joint Select Committee (10th Sept., 1917). Second Sitting of Seven (10th Sept., 1917). Diplomatic Duplicity. Feeling in Vienna. Abolition of Secret Diplomacy. Jingo Incitements. A Trip to the Eastern Front. A Dove of Peace from the North? A Party Congress in War-time. Princely Candidates for the Chancellorship. Interview with Prince Bülow. Interview with Prince Hatzfeld. The Kaiser Insane?	
III. IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS	98
Bolshevists Reckon on German Support. Another Trip to Sweden. Peace Resolution and Brest-Litowsk. Herr Wallraff Packs Up. Poland's Fate? Death Sentences between Whiles. "Tree-frog" Annexationists. Amusing Episodes.	
IV. THE LAST OFFENSIVE	140
V. PRINCE MAX APPEARS	147
Before the Collapse.	
VI. LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE	155
The Army Can't Wait Forty-eight Hours. The Chancellor and His Cabinet. Ludendorff's Despair. Painful Duplicity. Between Question and Answer. Prince Max Acts on His Own. Wilson's First Answer. The Weak Nerves of the Supreme Command. Second Note to Wilson. Wilson's Second Note. Third Note	

to Wilson. The Kaiser: "To the Last Blow." Liebknecht's Amnesty. The Prince again Speaks in the Reichstag. Wilson's Latest Answer. Ludendorff's Political Stunt. Another Reply to Wilson. Emperor Charles to Emperor William in True Friendship. Viennese Ask Berlin for Bread. Reform in a Hurry. Bolshevik Propaganda. The Emperor to Go! The Emperor Flies to G.H.Q. Unknown Advisers. Ebert's Attitude to the Kaiser Problem. Wild Days in Kiel. Causes of the Kiel Riots. The Kaiser for the White Flag. Hannemann, Forward! The Prince's Trust in Ebert. On the Day before the Collapse. The Kaiser Resists. In the Section on 8th Nov. On the Eve of 9th Nov. Stop Shooting—Abdication. Ebert as Chancellor for One Day.

VII. THE REPUBLIC PROCLAIMED 261

Five Minutes Later. No Cessation of Hostilities. Basis of Agreement for the S.P.D. and the Independent Socialists. 9th Nov. at G.H.Q.

VIII. THE PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK 274

A Sea of Trouble. Liebknecht's Revolutionaries. A Mysterious Enterprise. Fight for the Constituent Assembly. Otto Wels. Noske Forms a Defence Force. Murder of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Elections to the National Assembly. Ebert on the Duties of the President of the Republic.

IX. IN WEIMAR 301

The First Republican Government.

X. THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES 307

The Cabinet Alters My Speech. In the Aula of Berlin University. Split in the Cabinet. A Minority Declaration.

XI. LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE SECTION 321

Differences of Opinion. The Enemy Is on the Right.

XII. THE KAPP-PUTSCH 329

The Kapp-Putsch in the Provinces. In Stuttgart. From My Speech on the Kapp-Putsch. A Speech in

CONTENTS

vii
PAGE

the Section. Aftermath of the Kapp-Putsch. The
Flood Tide of Reaction. A Bad Year. Warnings
against Assaults. Germany above All Things. My
Object.

INDEX 365

307

301

ILLUSTRATIONS

PORTRAIT OF SCHEIDEMANN	<i>frontispiece</i> FACING PAGE
SCHEIDEMANN SPEAKING FROM A WINDOW OF THE PALACE OF THE CHANCELLOR (OF THE EMPIRE) DURING THE DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION	244
SCHEIDEMANN, ON NOVEMBER 9, 1918, ANNOUNCES THE REPUBLIC FROM THE BUILDING OF THE REICHSTAG	262
CONGRESS OF THE BOARDS OF LABOURERS AND SOLDIERS OF GERMANY, DECEMBER 16, 1918	284
THE SPARTACUS TERROR IN BERLIN: THE BUILDING OF THE "VOR- WÄRTS" AFTER THE ATTACK OF DECEMBER 25, 1918	288
A PORTAL OF THE CASTLE OF BERLIN, SHOT TO PIECES, AFTER THE STREET BATTLES	292
EBERT'S SPEECH, HELD AT THE OPENING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEM- BLY AT WEIMAR, FEBRUARY 6, 1919	304
IMPORTANT CONFERENCE WITH ENTENTE-SOCIALISTS AT BERLIN ON MARCH 24, 1923	350

VOLUME II

I

STOCKHOLM

ON the evening of 22nd April, 1917, our friend, Karl Kiefer, arrived in Berlin with an important letter from Stauning. Stauning had had a talk with Comrade Albert Thomas, French Minister of Munitions, who had been in Stockholm on his way to St. Petersburg. Thomas anticipated the French coming to Stockholm. The Alsace-Lorraine question was a difficult one for them. Stauning clearly let us see in his letter that he wished to tell us more by word of mouth. The Executive instructed Ebert and me to go forthwith to Copenhagen. We had a talk beforehand with Wahnschaffe on the Alsace-Lorraine question, who "lay very low" and referred us to the Chancellor and Zimmermann, the Secretary of State, who were well versed in those things. Next day I had an interview with Zimmermann. He told me in confidence that he had spoken with the Supreme Command on the subject. The Supreme Command were also in favour of a rectification of frontiers, should that make peace any easier, as I had represented to Wahnschaffe. At General Headquarters he had come to an understanding with Ludendorff; from a military point of view this and that proposal presented various difficulties, but, as Ludendorff said, they might be overcome.

For us it was a valuable hint. On my going on to speak of conditions at home and Prussia's reputation abroad, Zimmermann said, "That will change, I give you my word."

On 26th April we had a talk with Stauning early in the morning at his office in Copenhagen. He was then Minister

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

without Portfolio. We told him to pass on our information to Thomas with great caution. Our negative attitude with regard to the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine did not mean the rejection of a rectification of boundaries, in which, let us say, about twenty or thirty frontier villages were to change hands. If the question of French prestige could be got out of the way by such a settlement, we could certainly talk things over. Stauning thought our view reasonable, and promised to inform Thomas, if it were possible, and speak with him, directly he came back from St. Petersburg. Stauning told us that all his messages to us by letter were based on Branting's or Thomas's facts. Branting had told him that all the Russian groups had notified their willingness to come to Stockholm. Stauning thought Thomas clearly in favour of peace, and was trying to get rid of the Alsace-Lorraine difficulty. Stauning explained to us that preliminary negotiations would take place with every national group and with various groups of individual nations before the Conference opened in Stockholm.

While Stauning, with van Kol and Troelstra, who had just arrived in Copenhagen from Holland, travelled to Stockholm, we had once more to return to Berlin. In company with Victor Adler, whom the Austrians decided to leave in Stockholm as their responsible representative, I travelled again to Copenhagen, where I had an interview, besides others with other people, with Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, the German envoy. He saw in the formula "without annexations and war reparations" a security for Germany of the first importance, as we Social Democrats did. I was luckily able to relieve a very critical situation in which the Danish Minister, Skavenius, was placed owing to the torpedoing of Danish ships. In agreement with the Commercial Attaché, Dr. Töpfer, and with the consent of Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, I was enabled to send a personal

STOCKHOLM

telegram in code to Zimmermann, in which I pointed out how badly things would go for us in Denmark if the so-called Bergen Channel were not opened. It was opened, and so Skavenius, a very sensible Minister, quite fair to Germany, could remain in office.

The German delegates to Stockholm arrived in Copenhagen on 1st June, 1917, were at once informed of all important happenings in Stockholm and Copenhagen, and travelled on next morning to Stockholm. Victor Adler was at the Grand Hotel; we were quartered at the Continental, a huge barrack of a place. Adler was furious with the International Peace Bureau. He told us, among other things, of a huge *questionnaire* which was to be laid before us and would have done credit certainly to a German Privy Councillor, as we should find out later. We forthwith held a Delegates Meeting, at which Stauning, Adler and Hueber (Vienna) were present, to get information about this *questionnaire*. At this meeting—to give just one instance of what was in store for us—Adler told us that any argument about national self-determination was foolish, as it was a scandal to persuade small nations and States that they could make themselves independent in every respect. The Committee therefore had only to discuss *one* question and make it plain: How are we best to pave the way for peace? “Stop shooting.” There you have it!”

After a lengthy discussion, in which Stauning took part, we agreed so far as to insist on the *questionnaire* being provided at the first meeting with the International Bureau—on a statement of our war policy—then on an adjournment, so that we delegates could discuss our answers to the *questionnaire*; also, that the minutes and declarations of the Conference were only material to us after we had read and signed them. These demands were necessary because Adler and Hueber informed

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

us that Camille Huysman had arbitrarily altered the sense of the Austrian text in the French version.

The German delegates agreed to the following policy at the first sitting. "We require: (1) Absolute secrecy of all negotiations at this preliminary Conference. (2) Control and counter-signment of all minutes. (3) Agreement in all matter given to the Press. (4) Clarity in any intended exchange of views between Section and Section. With regard to the voluminous *questionnaire*, our opinions are reserved."

When we went to our first "hearing," the following were present from the International Socialistic Bureau (I.S.B.): Branting, Stauning, Troelstra, van Kol, Huysman, Vitnös (Christiania), with Engbjerg and Möller (Stockholm) as secretaries. Our delegates were all present: Bauer, David, Ebert, Fischer, Legien, Sassenbach and Scheidemann. Ebert, whom we appointed our chairman, did his job excellently. With formal politeness he clearly represented our practical standpoint: "To-day we cannot undertake the discussion of your *questionnaire*, because we must first examine and debate it. On the other hand, we consider it necessary to declare to you the war policy we have consistently followed. With this object we ask that Scheidemann address the meeting."

I stated, in a speech lasting more than an hour, our war policy, giving chapter and verse from the "Collection" that has been often quoted. I made all sorts of malicious remarks, quoting, incidentally, the resolutions of the French Socialists. At the end I said, in terms of bitter irony and rigid politeness, that the I.S.B. and its present directors would do great service to the cause of the International, and make a substantial contribution to mutual understanding, if they would publish similar collections of authenticated documents on the work done for peace by the Socialists of the Entente.

STOCKHOLM

A tactless speech by our honest van Kol, who spoke on German War Guilt, was the signal for a speech by Dr. David on responsibility for the outbreak of war.

On 5th June no meeting could be held, as Branting and Stauning were detained by urgent business.

On 6th June David, supported by facts placed at his disposal, spoke, in terms of the firmest conviction, on the happy position Germany was in as regards War Guilt. David's speech undoubtedly made a great impression. Troelstra gave it undisguised approval and expressed to David his admiration.

Before every meeting we had very full discussions, and Victor Adler was often present. On 8th June we considered the technique of the *questionnaire* and asked all sorts of pertinent questions. To give only one instance. In that part of the *questionnaire* devoted to Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine, North Schleswig, etc., we asked searching questions about Ireland, Egypt, India, Morocco, Tripoli, Malta, Gibraltar, etc. Either—so we agreed—the entire world must be redistributed at the peace, especially the territories above mentioned, or the discussion confined to the countries which had been affected by war or changed their owners; in which case, Alsace-Lorraine and Schleswig would drop out. Branting made a wry face, but no one could shake the logic of our arguments. At the end the question raised by me in the report and clearly stated was added to the *questionnaire*: What have you (in each Section) done to bring about a Socialistic peace? It would be going too far to report on everything mentioned. On 10th June Dr. David, Hermann Müller and myself had the honour to be commissioned to draft the memorandum in reply to the *questionnaire*. Dr. David wrote on Question 1, Müller on Question 2, and myself on Question 3, etc. The Stockholm Memorandum (see p. 6), that has played a great part, and will maintain its importance as long as

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

there is any talk of the peace efforts of the S.P.D. in the World War, was finally approved by the German delegates in the following wording:

THE STOCKHOLM MEMORANDUM

I

"German Social Democracy aims at a peace by agreement. As it requires the guarantee of political, economic and progressive freedom for its own people, so it rejects the forcible suppression of the vital interests of other nations. Only such a treaty in itself can give a guarantee of permanence; only such a treaty can make it possible for nations to overcome their excited feelings of hostility and use all their strength for the advance of social progress and the furtherance of the highest national and human development.

"With this general aim in view we have given our assent to the proposal of the St. Petersburg Workers' and Soldiers' Council for peace without annexations and indemnities, on the principle of national self-determination. Our attitude to each and every condition is based upon this principle and is as follows:

"1. *Annexations*.—We are opposed to forcible annexations. In any alteration of frontiers by mutual agreement, legal and economic facilities for their transference must be assured to the population concerned, if it desires to remain with its original community.

"With the rejection of all forcible annexations any colonies seized are naturally to be restored.

"2. *War Compensations*.—The forcible levy of any war compensation is to be rejected. It could only be obtained after a complete defeat of one of the contending parties. Every day of further fighting increases the loss in blood and treasure for

STOCKHOLM

both sides so enormously that any postponement of peace to enforce compensations is unjustifiable in consequence. The economic enslavement of one nation by another would make a lasting peace impossible.

“3. *Restoration*.—If by this question is meant political restoration, *i.e.* the rehabilitation of its national independence, our answer is in the affirmative. On the other hand, we must oppose the idea of a one-sided obligation to repair all damage done in the war areas. This damage in every war area has been done by friend and foe in advance or retreat, partly as an indirect measure of military security. . . . Any subsequent valuation of the cause of isolated damage, and any inquiry into its military justification, seem to us to be extremely difficult. A one-sided obligation to pay compensation for damage done is nothing less than a war reparation in disguise.

“For States that are unable to reconstruct their economic life, ruined by the War, by their own efforts, international financial help can be provided by mutual agreement. We Socialists, moreover, regard the destruction of private property as the least important of the damage done. The greatest loss that has affected humanity—the destruction of men’s lives, of men’s labour and prosperity—cannot be replaced.

“4. *National Self-determination*.—We understand by this the right of every nation to maintain or revive its political independence.

“In the first group are those nations that, like Belgium and Serbia and other Balkan States, have lost their independence in this War.

“We are in favour of the restoration of an independent Belgium. Belgium must not be a vassal State either of England, France or Germany. As to Serbia and the other Balkan States, we support what our Austrian colleagues have said.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

"The second group in favour of which the right of self-determination must be exercised comprises those nations that have lost their former independence through events in this War, but see themselves liberated from foreign control. This applies to Congress Poland and Finland. The right of self-determination cannot be denied them. In the case of other countries of foreign stock, in as far as national independence does not arise, there must be at least autonomy for the development of their own national life.

"A third group comprises nations, formerly independent, of advanced civilization, which became the victims of Imperial oppression, but whose constitutional status has not been changed through this War, *e.g.* Ireland, Egypt, Tripoli, Morocco, India, Tibet, Korea, and other countries who formerly possessed their own national life. German Social Democracy has the strongest sympathy for the efforts of all these nations for the attainment of their national liberty, and would welcome it if the Socialists in those States ruling these countries would exert their will for the purpose of freeing these lands from the yoke of foreign rule.

"5. *Autonomy of Nationalities.*—If by this is meant the progressive autonomy of foreign-speaking districts included within a larger State, German Social Democracy will advocate the widest concessions in accordance with its traditional practice. In the German Empire we have to consider the claims of our fellow-citizens in North Schleswig, Posen, West Prussia, as well as in Alsace-Lorraine, talking Danish, Polish, and French. We condemn most strongly any interference with the use of the mother tongue, as well as any sort of hindrance to the full exercise of their peculiar characteristics and progress; such pacts of other nationalities as impinge on the territory of a State shall be no let or hindrance to friendly mutual relations, but rather be points of connection between people and people, and of

STOCKHOLM

moral progress in common. The attainment of this object will be the introduction of real democratic conditions in all lands. As to the relations of the several nationalities with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, we subscribe to what our Austrian comrades have said.

"6. *Alsace-Lorraine*.—As regards what is mentioned in the Committee's *questionnaire* about Alsace-Lorraine and its population, it must first be stated that Alsace-Lorraine has never been an independent national State or has ever been considered a separate nationality. According to its ethnic characteristics, *i.e.* its race and its language, nine-tenths of the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine are of German nationality. Only 11.4 of the population speak French as their mother-tongue.

"Alsace-Lorraine, moreover, is not one of those lands that have changed ownership through the result of this War; it has remained under the rule of the German Empire, except for a narrow strip of land on the frontier. The raising of the question of its nationality is therefore irrelevant. The territory of Alsace-Lorraine, politically and nationally belonging to Germany, along with other districts, has been from time to time snatched away by France by forcible annexation from the Confederacy of the German Empire. By the Treaty of Frankfort in 1871, its original nationality was restored. It is therefore wholly unjustified to speak of the historical claim of France to these regions. The enforced restoration of Alsace-Lorraine is nothing but annexation, and chiefly, moreover, an annexation of a foreign-speaking country by France. In accordance, therefore, with a peace without annexations, this is rejected. German Social Democracy demands for Alsace-Lorraine the guarantee of equal rights as an integral and independent State within the German Empire, as well as the free democratic development of its own laws and government. It has confirmed

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

this in a resolution passed at the Jena Congress in 1913 and introduced by our comrades of Alsace-Lorraine. Before the War the French members of the Socialist Party declared their agreement with the Alsace-Lorraine question, in the sense of its being a Federal State, free, equal, and wholly autonomous. This agreement, moreover, corresponds with the repeated and recently re-asserted declaration of the people's representatives in Alsace-Lorraine after a free vote at the General Election.

"The principle of a peace without annexations does not, of course, exclude friendly negotiations on rectification of frontiers, anywhere and everywhere.

II. CHIEF PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

"The right of every nation to political independence and economic development, due regard being paid to the legitimate and vital interests of all nations, can only be lastingly guaranteed when peace treaties succeed in exactly defining International Law in its main principles for the future.

"It will be the task of the coming years of peace to extend Constitutional Law, Industrial Law, Civil Law and Commercial Law on uniform principles, with a view to unite closer together Common Law, Trade Law, and Social Law.

"1. *International Regulations*.—In the clauses respecting War Aims that the S.P.D. already proposed at the Executive and Parliamentary meetings on 16th August, 1915, the establishment of a lasting peace by International Law was advocated as the highest moral duty.

"In agreement with the resolutions of the Copenhagen International Socialist Congress in 1910, we specially demanded by means of peace treaties the recognition of an International Tribunal to which all disputes between separate states should be submitted, and the setting up of an extraordinary jurisdiction

STOCKHOLM

for the avoidance of any violation of international agreements.

"2. *Disarmament and Freedom of the Seas.*—Agreements on the limitations of armaments, military and naval, are to be included in the peace treaties. The object of the agreements must be the establishment of a standing national army for self-defence against warlike attack and offensive by force. The period of service for individual arms, artillery, infantry, etc., in this national army should be as short as possible.

"War material such as is recognized in warfare is to be limited by treaty. The manufacture of munitions is to be nationalized. The supply of arms and munitions from neutral countries is to be stopped. The arming of merchantmen is to be forbidden. All sea communications indispensable for international trade, and inter-sea canals, are to be placed under international control. Effective security is to be provided for international trade in time of war. What is to be contraband must be decided internationally. Raw material for clothing and food are to be struck out of the list of contraband articles. Private property is to be secured against enemy interference. The postal service between nations at war and neutrals is to be maintained in time of war. The policy of blockade is to be reviewed.

"3. *Economic and Social-political Questions.*—In order that the *rapprochement* between nations shall not be hindered, provisions are to be embodied in the peace treaties for security against any war being continued as an economic war.

"By peace treaties, freedom of communications on land and sea must be restored.

"Tariff barriers to be abolished. The most-favoured-nation clause has to be included in the peace treaties. The political and commercial object should be to remove all Customs and transport barriers.

"For the Colonies, the doctrine of the 'open door' is to be

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

established for the economic benefit of all nations—that is to say, equal rights for all.

“International freedom of movement, the right of combines, workers’ protection, workers’ insurance, protection for female workers and children and home workers, are to be regulated according to the published programme of International Trades Unions.

“4. *Abolition of Secret Diplomacy*.—We require that all State treaties and agreements should be submitted to the democratic control of the people’s representatives.

III. PRACTICAL EXECUTION OF OBJECTS

“We refer to our statements I and II. In the interests of a quick peace it seems to be our bounden duty to discuss, in the first place, economic and social-political questions. Commissions of Inquiry are doubtless very useful in the preliminary work of efficacious declarations on social and national problems. It should be remembered that the most speedy conclusion of peace must be a *sine qua non* for International Socialism. This, we are convinced, can be brought about through a peace by agreement—on the lines of no annexations, no compensation without any preliminary negotiations.

IV. ACTION BY THE INTERNATIONAL

“European neutrals have been, without exception, drawn into more or less sympathy through the War. They have all an interest in a quick peace. They are therefore attracted by the formulation of economic, social, political and legal problems of an international kind.

“The co-operation of elected representatives seems assured. Faced by the experiences that the proletariat of all countries engaged in the War has had with Parliamentary majorities in

STOCKHOLM

the War up to now, its co-operation will only be directed towards shortening the War if the Socialist Parties, with all their might, bring pressure on their Governments and Parliaments to bring about a speedy peace.

“The further questions concerning the co-operation of the International during peace negotiations are satisfactorily answered. The pressure of the Socialist Parties on their Governments, and the people’s representatives’ influence on the official Peace Conference, must be strengthened by the Socialist Parties among all nations engaged in the War.

V. THE PEACE EFFORTS OF THE SOCIALIST PARTIES

“Here we come to the question that has been added to the *questionnaire* on the motion of the German delegation on 7th June.

“Report of every delegation on the work of their Party in favour of a lasting peace.

“The Executive of the S.P.D. has published in two volumes a ‘Collection of Explanations, Manifestoes, and Speeches in the Reichstag’ in which the positions of the Party to the War and the Peace have been made clear. In this collection it is proved that the S.P.D., which, like all other Socialist Parties, stands on principle for the defence of the country, has worked for the conclusion of peace since the first year of the War, and knows only of one provision for a peace by agreement—the readiness of the enemy for such a peace. But the S.P.D. has not been content with its work for peace by this collection of Parliamentary speeches, manifestoes, and explanations. It has held peace meetings in every part of the Empire and circulated petitions throughout the Empire signed in its name, in which, while sternly repudiating all plans of annexations, it has required the Government to be ready to make peace.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

"The work for peace has been followed by great results. The S.P.D.'s attempts to reunite the torn threads with the Socialist Parties in England and France were unfortunately without success.

"The work for peace can only give promise of success if it is undertaken by both sides at the same time. This could have been done and should have been done long ago, according to our opinion, without making any demand that might have been taken for a surrender of its people's cause. We should all of us have said we had only one duty—to defend our own people, but it was no business of ours to punish other nations for the actual or alleged crimes of their Governments.

VI. GENERAL SOCIALIST CONFERENCES

"We are prepared without reserve to take part in a general Socialist Peace Conference, because we think it the obvious duty of every Socialist to work for peace. A statement about the policy of the Socialist Parties will be made easier if all sections would circulate a collection of documents, in the form as chosen by us, bearing on their efforts for peace.

"By a discussion of the War Guilt problem, which we cannot avoid, we can hardly promise that the object of the Conference would be advanced. It cannot do any good to argue about what is past; it behooves us rather to agree on the future, especially on the speediest possible way of bringing about a lasting peace that satisfies our ideals and our principles.

"We have no objection to any minority Socialist Party taking part in the General Conference.

"Stockholm, 12th June, 1917."

The delegation of the S.P.D. was Fr. Ebert, Scheidemann, Hermann Müller, Molkenbuhr, Ed. David, R. Fischer, Sassenbach, G. Bauer, C. Legien.

STOCKHOLM

From day to day our pessimism increased. There were no signs of the expected French, English, Belgians, Italians and Russians.

Our Memorandum was discussed at several meetings with the members of the Committee. Alterations of wording were allowed, but none of content. As only preliminaries with individual nations had hitherto been discussed for the forthcoming Socialist Peace Conference, we still continued in the waiting-room to hope even up to the time of departure. The delegation was going home with the exception of David, Müller and myself, after Branting had asked us all to breakfast in Salztjöbaden. That was on 16th June. As luck would have it, the St. Petersburg telegram arrived in the morning, and the fact was published that the delegates of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils would soon come to Stockholm. Branting welcomed us in warm terms at the dinner. By meeting together, and after a thorough talk, this and that misunderstanding was removed. Ebert asked me to reply for the delegation. My toast was for peace and the means of peace—the Socialist International.

We were very much at home, perhaps more than that. At eight most of the party broke up, headed by Victor Adler. As I had nothing to do in Stockholm that evening, I proposed that our comrades who were also free should pass the lovely evening by the sea. Branting seconded. Only six in all remained: Branting, David, Vitnös, Borgbjerg, Albarda and I.

After my comrades' departure from Stockholm, David, Müller and I kept in touch with the Committee and kept on hoping, with decreasing patience, that finally became angry impatience, for the turn of the tide and the arrival of the for-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

eign Socialists. Müller, who was now beginning to show in startling fashion the "slim line" affected later by the ladies, and causing us great anxiety by his sickly appearance, was to remain behind as our representative in Stockholm and keep his eyes open. In any case, he was to "feed himself up" before returning to our blessed land of turnips. Müller had many interesting experiences during the many weeks of his stay. One thing, however, did not mature—the great Peace Conference.

The day before my departure from Stockholm Frau Nina Bang, a clever and sympathetic woman, who later was the able Minister of Education in Stauning's Government, informed me of a conversation she had had with Thomas. He was furious about our Memorandum, and thus answered one of her questions, "The War must go on; we can do nothing else." The subject of the conversation was once more Alsace-Lorraine. David and Müller, whom I told at once, went again most thoroughly into the Alsace-Lorraine question with Stauning and me, along with the Annexation problem put forward in our Memorandum. Stauning and Frau Bang were able to have another talk with Thomas. He denied our references to Germany's historical and ethnic rights, as well as the fact that nine-tenths of the population of Alsace-Lorraine were German-speaking. It was of no consequence what language was spoken in Alsace-Lorraine; the will of the people to return to France was the deciding factor. After a long argument he mentioned an "*arbitrage obligatoire après la guerre.*" Stauning and Frau Bang got the impression that the French were trying to shelve the Alsace-Lorraine difficulty. An Arbitration Court after the War would decide the question by a referendum whether Alsace-Lorraine should belong to Germany or France. The result of this referendum would then be

STOCKHOLM

absolute. The proposal seemed to us unfortunate; we did not, however, reject it. We said to ourselves, "When the War is over, no one will want to reopen the Alsace-Lorraine question." We had the firm conviction that Alsace-Lorraine had become a question of prestige for the French in some mysterious way and that a way out must be sought for and found.

Camille Huysman, who had asked to see me next day, said Thomas had been very sensible. He would at once on his arrival in Paris grant passes to the Socialists for their journey to Stockholm. Though the French Minister of Munitions, he unfortunately did not succeed.

Stockholm had failed. Millions of men in all countries desirous of peace were one hope the poorer. In spite of it all we did not lose heart; we were still in touch with the Stockholm Committee and stuck to our task.

II

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

THE S.D. Section had entrusted me with the chairmanship of the new Constitutional Select Committee of the Reichstag. Ebert, who had pressed me to accept this duty, had declined owing to his work for the Party organization in the Bureau. He had not much time for Parliamentary work. The Committee worried me considerably and practically did very little. The Conservatives, later the German Nationalists, obstructed from the first, because they would not permit any extension of the Constitution. The Imperial Government helped the reactionaries instead of boldly taking over the management. What ill feeling they could have prevented, had they at once carried through the reform of the Prussian franchise that had been so long promised!

As the *bourgeois* Centre Parties showed more fear than democratic determination during the negotiations in Committee, this body proved itself more and more an unsuitable instrument for the Parliamentary and democratic reform. I have described elsewhere at length how the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, opposed the work of the Committee.¹

In his work on the German Reichstag, Dr. Bredt, Professor in Marburg University, has not only very hard things to say on the irresolution of the Reichstag both on the Peace question and on constitutional reform, but also criticizes in the

¹ "The Collapse," 1921.

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

sharpest way the Committee itself. He says, "There was nothing like systematic co-operation among the Majority Parties in the direction of Parliamentary Government. There gradually emerged a new star in the firmament, divided into three parts. On the Right Wing were the Conservatives and Independent Conservatives, who were on principle opposed to any reform; on the Left Wing were the Majority Socialists and Independents, for whom the reforms did not go far enough; in the middle were the National Liberals, the Centre and the Progressives, who were contented with things as they were. How could any Parliamentary reform come from them?" Bredt in many places in his book reproaches the Reichstag for never being able to pull itself together to make any proper use of the powers it possessed. This reluctance to show its strength must in the first instance be referred to the unhappy Party dissensions in the Empire and to selfish rivalry in catching votes.

In countless speeches and articles I expressed my conviction—before the War—that in 1912 Parliamentary Government should have been introduced after the General Election, where every third voter voted S.D. This was the time; the psychological moment was unfortunately missed. Imperial statesmen, to use Bethmann-Hollweg's words, did not understand the signs of the times (he did not either!) and were not in a position to prevent the outbreak of war. A democratized Germany, ruled by Parliament, could have prevented the outbreak of war.

Experiences in the Constitutional Select Committee repeatedly led to heated representations to Wahnschaffe and his master. Then there were also the reports that partly David and I, partly Ebert and I, gave to Wahnschaffe, Zimmermann

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

and the Chancellor about our Stockholm experiences. They all praised our Memorandum. Wahnschaffe gave it general approval, Zimmermann congratulated us and said the Memorandum was a splendid piece of work. The Chancellor said that our attitude was thoroughly logical and from our standpoint the only right one. That William II. incidentally at the Foreign Office highly praised our Stockholm effort we considered a bit of bad luck, through which the work done at Stockholm could not, however, be affected. When David and I again drew the Chancellor's attention to the wretched conditions at home, and described the bitter feeling that was growing with regard to democratic reform, which, though often announced, was never attempted, Bethmann-Hollweg requested us to draw up a memorandum for Headquarters. "Both of you gentlemen have facile pens; get to work on it at once, as I am shortly going there." David undertook to draft it; it was approved by the Executive and the Reichstag Section and signed by the members of the Executive. Some sentences from the memorandum are given here:

"Our own observations, as well as reports reaching us from all sides, force the conviction upon us that the moral power of resistance among our people is diminishing. In view of this grave crisis we consider it our duty to say what must be done, in our opinion, to ward off catastrophe. *We* will take no responsibility if what alone can save our country is neglected."

Then there followed a reference to the food conditions.

"The spirit of the population is most deeply depressed owing to continuous privation. A further factor that depresses their spirit is the absence of any new measures relating to our political conditions at home, based on equal rights.

". . . The belief in the possibility of a decisive victory has

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

been more and more shaken. The feeling that all further sacrifices are useless, that the superiority of the enemy in numbers and in material is too great, and that the longer the War lasts the worse our position will become—this feeling is getting hold of the soldiers abroad as well as the people at home. In this condition of things the policy and unscrupulous behaviour of the Pan-Germans threaten to bring upon our country the most serious danger. The agitation in these circles, which is supported by ample resources derived originally from profiteering, produces a feeling among the population that the War is being continued for the purpose of annexation, and the fault of not entertaining peace negotiations falls upon us. A fourth winter campaign is threatening us. The critical question is asked: Can the German people hold on through it? If we enter on it, the sufferings of our people will be enormously increased. Outbreaks of despair have been noticed from several parts of the Empire. How much more frightful it will be if the worst comes to the worst. Let no one accuse us of pessimism, and let no one be buoyed up with the hope that things will go on as they have always done. All things come to an end. The Socialist Democratic Party has done all it can throughout these years to maintain the morale of the home population, and co-operated with all its might in the defence of the country. But we dare not forget that the strength of our people is coming to an end. . . . There is only one way out to fend off the worst calamity. The Russian Revolution offers a possible point of contact that must not be ignored. The Workers' and Soldiers' Council has found a slogan: Peace without annexations and war compensation. Your Excellency's answer in the Reichstag was just as unsatisfactory as the later statement in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. Russia will remain within the Entente, so long as the German Govern-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

ment refuses to make up its mind to agree to a general peace on the basis of the St. Petersburg formula. . . .”

The concluding sentences run as follows:

“Now it is neck or nothing! Our German Empire and its future are at stake. Sticking to war aims that exceed our rights and are at the same time impracticable, prolongs the War and leads us to ruin. Everyone should know that the German people is only fighting for its rights as a nation to live and progress, and is ready at any time to conclude peace that will guarantee its right to live. Everything that hinders such a peace must drop out and everything that brings peace nearer us must be done as speedily as possible. Only when the conviction is deeply rooted in the masses of the people that the Fatherland for which we fight and suffer is a home of freedom and civil justice, will they do their utmost and sacrifice their all to protect it against every attempt from without.”

As a sign of the temper inside the Socialist Democratic Party, the following entry in my pocket-book on 27th June, 1917, may be quoted: “A sitting of the Party Select Committee took place, at which the chairman of the Reichstag Committee was present. I reported on the Stockholm negotiations. The debate took a characteristic turn. All were perfectly agreed about what we did. But this was the general trend of what was said—the forthcoming War Credit Bill must be rejected if the Chancellor did not clearly declare his war policy or promise reform at home. Gradnauer and David, speaking as members of the Party Executive, were quite horrified, and tried to influence their minds by referring to our previous policy—to pass the Credits, as long as the enemy was not ready for peace. As the last speaker, I justified those who com-

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

plained of the Chancellor, but to-day I refrained from stating definitely the view of the Section. In politics there are some things outside 'Ayes' and 'Noes.' Who could know how things would shape in a week? A motion by Loebe, through which the Section's action should be definitely stated, was in the interval withdrawn, after Ebert had used his influence on Loebe."

On the evening of the same day David and I were with the Chancellor, with whom we discussed the matter and also referred to the temper prevailing to-day in our Section.

We got the impression that he looked upon the situation as hopeless and would like to make an end under relatively tolerable conditions. He even appeared ready to sacrifice Alsace-Lorraine, at any rate partially, if peace could be got that way.

The Peace Resolution

Everybody seemed in a suppressed state of high excitement—the Parties, the Sections, the Intersectional Committee, the Constitutional Committee, and the Chief Select Committee.

In the Party sittings of the *bourgeois* members the excitement was worse, we were told, than amongst us. Everybody was out of temper. The Government was not decisive enough for the Conservatives and most of the National Liberals in its war policy and in rebuffing the Left in their demands for reform at home. All the other Parties pointed to leanings towards the Right, and reproached the Government with letting the reins slip out of its hands, so that the Supreme Command could act more tyrannically than ever. The belief in victory, or in a tolerably satisfactory termination of the War, had disappeared from among all Parties on the Left of the National Liberals, except among a miserable fraction of short-sighted optimists. The U-boat war had not brought

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

England to her knees, as was definitely foreshadowed. A horrible "head" followed the U-boat intoxication.

So were things when Erzberger, at a meeting of the Chief Committee, adopted the standpoint that the Socialist Democratic Party had long advocated (5th July, 1917)—end the War as soon as possible, otherwise the last stages will be frightful.

Erzberger first remarked that another year of war would cost Germany fifty milliard marks, thirty-six for the War itself and fifteen for war losses. Food conditions were becoming worse and worse. The U-boat war was supposed, according to the statements of the Naval Secretary of State, to make England ready for peace in six months. There was no chance of that. The calculations of the Secretary of State were all wrong. Erzberger proved it fully by the figures of world tonnage. Then, turning on Helfferich, he continued: "The Secretary of State for Home Affairs has said that only a peace of surrender can now be got. No one can say that with certainty. The question to ask oneself is this: Is there any prospect of getting a better peace in 1918? One should not take the view that this War has been fought uselessly, and that taxes will press hard upon us without war compensations. Our people can tolerate a future such as now stands before it. But the continuance of the War must lead to ruin. We must go back to the starting point of the War. The German people will stand united in a war of self-defence." Erzberger further said that the War must go on at all costs and by all means; if only a big majority in the Reichstag could be rallied to the same opinion as on 4th August, 1914—that we were standing for a war of defence and took all the consequences, that we were aiming at a peace by agreement that took into

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

consideration the military position caused by the War—a peace that would not lead to the oppression of nations; if the Reichstag could say that to the Reichs-Government, that would be the best way to peace.

In the course of his speech Erzberger, apart from his statistics of the existing world tonnage, had not said a word that had not been already spoken or written by Social Democrats. The surprise for the Government and the Conservative Parties was the fact that a member of Parliament, such as Erzberger, an active and influential anti-Socialist, should have taken a Socialist attitude. We Socialists had asked the Reichstag often enough to acknowledge a war in self-defence; to get a majority in the Reichstag for a resolution to this effect, as Erzberger suggested, would have been naturally impossible for us. Now help was coming from the Centre; now the Reichstag had to do what the Chancellor had not dared to do with regard to the Right. A short account only need be given of the comprehensive discussion in the Chief Committee after Erzberger's speech. The Secretaries of State, Capelle and Helfferich, were violently attacked and their position was not an enviable one. Bredt's impartiality is proved in his often-quoted book, by his giving not only the speeches of the Chancellor, Erzberger, Helfferich and Capelle, etc., but also mine, that I had delivered on the motion of the S.D. Committee, after exchanging my seat on the Constitutional Committee for one on the Chief Committee on 7th July, the day of Erzberger's speech.

Bredt says of the speech, that it was "very important, cautious in its wording and clear in its content"—he reproduced it as it stood, in six closely printed pages. Unfortunately I cannot spare so much space for my speeches in this book, yet it seems necessary, for getting a right idea of the situation and

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

the policy of my Party, to give a few sentences from my speech as they appear in Bredt's book:

"If no military decision can be arrived at, agreement is the only thing left. This naturally postulates that we speak the truth and clearly state our position to the outside world. We must not now be deluded, but look things in the face, see them as they actually are, and not be led away by the idea that our enemy's position is no better than our own. We must not be deceived by wrong-headed patriotism about facts that admit of no deception. We must now be clear on this point—we can advance no further and must cry halt."

"Scheidemann," Bredt continues, "can speak to the point on the best ways and means, as he has been studying the question for years, as everybody knows. He bears no malice; members of the Reichstag must now recognize his motives as purely disinterested. He has been often hurt in his feelings because his efforts have been misunderstood.

"We must now, he says, be ready for a peace without annexations and reparations. He understands this will be a bitter pill for many—the more swollen a man's head is, the less moderate is his language. It is only natural. But there is now no other way out, and we must surely reflect that this is no peace of surrender. The formula 'Without annexations and reparations' is a real protective formula. It was stated a long time back that Scheidemann was the first man in the country to say that every country must bear its own burden. That was wrong at the time; but the time has come when it is necessary in the country's interest to adopt the formula 'No annexations, no reparations,' so that we can save our country and our money from being robbed by others. . . . One should see that a declaration by the Reichstag that justifies the pres-

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

ent situation as to our war aims must strengthen the position of the Provisional Government in Russia, that has wholly adopted the formula of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council. The effect will be enormous if Germany now assents to a peace by agreement. . . . We must now say to the German people: We cannot conjure up for you bread, meat and potatoes, but this assurance you have, that this unhappy war is not being continued because we have not declared our readiness to a peace by agreement. . . .

"Now it is time to prevent foreigners from concluding that Germany is on the point of collapse, and from placing any hopes upon it. We must one and all declare: 'We want a peace by agreement; if you won't have it, then we will hold on to the last man.'"

It would be a grave omission to leave out Herr Stresemann's speech in the Select Committee. He was, of course, as a representative of the National Liberals and one of those ridiculous Annexationists, in an extremely painful position. A few sentences from Bredt's very full report of the speech show Stresemann as he then was without adornment:

"The speaker admitted to there being differences of opinion among his Section. He confessed to belonging to the Annexationists. As such he was opposed, in the event of a military situation rendering a dictated peace possible, to the idea that all steps for increasing the power of our Empire should be ignored for doctrinaire reasons. Estimable authorities had from the beginning assumed the standpoint that no annexations should be made, no matter what course the War took, as Gothein, Member of the Reichstag, advocated in 1914. This idea should be strongly opposed. If the position of things justified it, there was nothing against incorporating territory

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

against the will of the population, should that make our future secure, after all political, economic and social points of view had been considered."

After a violent attack on Bethmann-Hollweg, Stresemann continued: "It may be argued whether negotiations on any peace offer can be entered on at the present time on the basis of *status quo ante*. It would be permissible after due consideration to say to the diplomatists, 'Get what you can out of the business.' But if the U-boat attack results in England's semi-final collapse and there is ground for expecting her final collapse, then we must say: 'Fight on till the last man.' There is at present a complete stalemate which may induce us in certain circumstances to accept such a peace offer."

The debate, which had begun on 6th July, the day of Erzberger's speech, in the Combined Party Select Committee, was more important than the course of the discussion in the Chief Committee.

The following members were present: Spahn, Erzberger, Müller (Fulda), Fehrenbach, von Payer, Müller (Meiningen), Haussmann, Gothein, Ebert, David, Südekum, Scheidemann, von Richthofen, Dr. Funk, Schiffer, Stresemann, and von Calker. It soon appeared that an agreement on principle existed on issuing a declaration in common, and Erzberger again spoke on his proposal: Readiness for peace as on 4th August, 1914; and our sole war aim—self-defence. After a long discussion, Stresemann addressed the Committee. He maintained his fundamental ideas about the Flanders coast, Courland, etc., but abandoned all subsidiary plans, because he no longer believed in their being practicable. Moreover, it was obvious that neither he nor any other man could join any Parliamentary Government unless he was in favour of a declaration. There

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

now existed an actual danger of neutrals joining in against us, because U-boat warfare would force them to do so.

The declaration as proposed did not seem to him timely; he fancied it was downright dangerous in view of the Russian offensive. This had had some success, which had been celebrated on a huge scale in Paris. He should like to know what the Social Democrats thought of this question: Can we get Courland through a negotiated peace?

David referred to our Stockholm Memorandum; van Calker said: "We can declare what we like, but the foreigner won't believe it unless we have a change of government."

Erzberger was not concerned in drawing up the Peace Resolution; our friend Dr. David did most of the work, helped by a Democrat and a member of the Centre. After it had been laid before the several Sections and much altered, the resolution received its final touches in the garden of the Home Office in the Wilhelmstrasse, with Ludendorff's assistance.

Before reporting further on the fate of the resolution, the intrigues hatched against Bethmann-Hollweg to bring about his fall must be mentioned. One of the chief actors was Stresemann, who was called Ludendorff's young man in the Combined Committee. At the sitting of the Chief Committee on 10th July, Stresemann made a violent attack on the Chancellor, to the great delight of Westarp and his friends. To Helfferich, Stresemann clearly stated how dependent he felt on the Supreme Command. Helfferich says in the third volume of his book, "World War": "The attitude of the Supreme Command must be of great importance in the policy of the National Liberal Section towards Bethmann-Hollweg. It could not be without effect on his Section if he were forced to say that General Ludendorff had made up his mind to resign if Bethmann-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Hollweg remained." Stresemann and Ludendorff were the champions of a dictated peace! After the Executive of the Centre Section had passed a motion that clearly intimated to the Chancellor to fix for himself the date of his retirement after conscientious consideration, Stresemann went a few days later to Vice-Chancellor Helfferich and told him that "the National Liberal Section had decided on informing the Chief of the Emperor's Civil Cabinet that, in their view, an end of the crisis was only thinkable if the Imperial Chancellor retired."

Readers of this book are aware that the Social Democratic Party were not exactly satisfied with the Chancellor. It is made clear as follows: The Right, inclusive of the National Liberals, opposed the Chancellor because his war policy was too slack; the Centre, the Democrats and the S.P.D. were furious because his peace policy was not strong enough. The Right also said he intended reforms of which the Reactionaries disapproved. The Social Democrats were angry because he did not press his reforms seriously enough, and so the Chancellor, in his attempts to please both Parties, had fallen between two stools. He fell at the very moment when he had at last got a certain majority in the Reichstag for a definite peace policy and had changed the Kaiser's opinion on the Equal Franchise in Prussia.

On 11th July, in the forenoon, I adjourned the Constitutional Committee, because Helfferich had told me after a Privy Council meeting that the Kaiser was having a struggle with himself over Electoral Reform. To-day or to-morrow the important decision would be given. But if the Emperor, though quite willing to issue a proclamation on the Equal Franchise at twelve, had had placed before him a resolution of the Constitutional Committee at eleven, a contingency might have arisen that could not be quite left out of considera-

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

tion. In the afternoon of this day the decree was laid before a meeting of the Prussian Ministry, in which the Kaiser approved of the Equal Franchise law. The Prussian "big-wigs" were horrified, refused to accept responsibility for such a step by their majority and resigned their portfolios. Bethmann-Hollweg took a strong line, let the irreconcilable Prussians go, and published the decree on 12th July. If he wanted to postpone his fall by this procedure the attempt came too late. The intriguers had already done too much work beforehand. Representatives of most Parties were invited to a discussion about Bethmann-Hollweg at the Crown Prince's house in order to tell him what they thought of the Chancellor. An officer, stated to be the well-known Colonel Bauer, sat unnoticed among those interrogated and noted every word that could be used against Bethmann-Hollweg. The Field-Marschals, von Hindenburg and Ludendorff, had already played their highest trumps—either Bethmann-Hollweg goes or we go. The Kaiser bitterly complained to Bethmann-Hollweg about the pressure brought to bear on him, as King, by this ultimatum from his chief Generals.

At a meeting of the Joint Select Committee on 9th July, 1917, Erzberger, who collected the gossip in all the Government offices, reported that the War Minister, von Stein, had summoned Hindenburg and Ludendorff to Berlin by telephone; their presence was required, as wonderful things were taking place. Bethmann-Hollweg heard of this. He intercepted the Emperor on the latter's return to Berlin and took him to his house at once. He had scored here. The Emperor forthwith sent back the two Generals. Yet they had time enough to send an officer to the Social Democratic offices to inquire whether Ebert and Scheidemann would have a talk with Ludendorff. We were naturally willing to say what

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

we thought to the gentleman, but did not see him, as has been said, because the Kaiser had ordered them to return to Headquarters immediately. Meanwhile the Joint Select Committee was in permanent session. Occasionally National Liberal members sent out select speakers, and it was evident from them that great differences existed in Stresemann's Section. On 12th July Messrs. Schiffer, Junck and von Richthofen were so badly treated by Fehrenbach that they withdrew to try their luck again in the National Liberal Section with the Peace Resolution. After an hour Richthofen arrived, to announce officially that his Section declined to be present, but would vote. "We are at last rid of the wobblers."

Events followed fast upon one another. Hindenburg and Ludendorff again arrived in Berlin to get in touch with the Sections. Conversations took place on 14th July in the office of the General Staff. From our Party Ebert and I were invited, from the Centre Erzberger and Mayer (Kaufbeuren), from the People's Progressive Party von Payer and Fischbeck. As the conversation with the Progressives who were first admitted took longer than the military gentlemen had expected, we and the Centre were asked to be good enough to discuss matters with the Generals. We were quite prepared to do so. Helfferich and Wahnschaffe sat in one corner of the room. Ludendorff started describing the position at the front, showed he was absolutely confident, but, to my surprise, assumed that the War would last one year more. After Erzberger's few questions about munitions I got to work; I linked up Ludendorff's explanations with a question to him and Hindenburg as to whether they had considered the state of things at home. Workmen were collapsing by hundreds every day in the factories from starvation; postwomen were fainting on the house steps. Hunger, deprivation and sorrowing

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

for the dead; indignation aroused by the Pan-German war proposals; no prospect of an end, and last, but not least, despair verging on revolution. I then gave cogent reasons for a declaration of war policy by the Reichstag, though I did not call it so. When I finished, Hindenburg began. What he had heard had much impressed him; yet it was impossible for things to go on as they were. Naturally, foolish war aims had been mentioned. We should retain countries that we had not yet conquered. Ludendorff spoke in the same strain. Then I continued my talk. The declaration to which the gentlemen referred was enough to negotiate on. Any acquisition of territory by force should be rejected absolutely. Ludendorff said, "Think of Aix-la-Chapelle if we can't secure ourselves against the Belgians." The two gentlemen then recommended the declaration being made more definite. They thought it would have a good effect at home, as we did. But abroad? No! They would again talk about our weakening. The tone should be stronger. As we were leaving, Helfferich said to me, "Are we still to discuss the declaration?" I replied, "There is nothing more to discuss."

At 6.30 P.M. we again assembled at the Select Committee. Payer, Fischbeck and Erzberger were absent. We had left the two Generals with the impression that they were not particularly pleased with the resolution—perhaps they were even upset by it, but did not actually oppose it. We had no misgivings about making it public. To avoid all further cross currents a letter for Helfferich was drawn up, requesting him to communicate the document to the Kaiser. This was ultimately dropped, as the course of events made it unnecessary. The original was given me for my diary. It was as follows:

15773

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

"Berlin,

"13th July, 1917.

"The Parties undersigned submit to Your Excellency the enclosed resolution of their war aims policy that they have passed and pressed on every Chancellor, along with the request that the same be presented to the Emperor without delay.

"It is the intention of the Parties to add to the declaration a special vote of thanks to the Army and Navy for what they have done.

"The majority consists of these following Parties of the Reichstag: the Sections of the Centre, the Progressive People's Party, the Social Democrats, a number of the German Section and other members.

"In great respect,

"On behalf of the United Parties."

The New Man

Dr. Michaelis was proclaimed the successor to Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, who had fallen overnight. Who was he? Who had recommended him in this hour of crisis? Beyond his having been a Prussian Food Controller no one knew him. Moreover he was decried as a narrow-minded bigot. People talked about a praying Evangelical who would bring the whole Empire to the way of salvation by urgent supplications to the Almighty. Had they in higher spheres fancied this was the beginning of Parliamentary Government? It was a highly promising start. Everybody in high places seemed smitten with blindness.

I was summoned by telephone on 15th July to go to the Home Office, as highly important business was in hand. I went reluctantly, thinking there would be another unnecessary discussion on the Peace Resolution. I had made no mis-

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

take. On reaching the Wilhelmstrasse a servant led me into the garden. "The Field-Marshal requested me to speak with the gentlemen in the garden." In the beautiful park there was at first no one to be seen. Turning down a path bearing to the right, I fell in with Hindenburg, Ludendorff, Helfferich and Michaelis. At this moment another group approached—von Payer, Haussmann, Ebert, Erzberger, Wahnschaffe, etc. As I made to join this group, Hindenburg asked me to stop. We exchanged a few words with no reference to politics; then Michaelis took me by the arm and led me off, to the great astonishment of the others. "I must talk with you alone, Herr Scheidemann. What is called the Scheidemann Peace I will make to-morrow if I can. But what are we to do with this resolution?" With that he tapped with his hand on the *Vorwärts* of 17th July, in which the Peace Resolution was printed.

"It's an excellent programme, Your Excellency," I replied.

"No, no," he ejaculated, "the resolution is very awkward for me; it binds me down too much; Hindenburg told you so yesterday."

There was a long conversation, lasting twenty-five to thirty minutes, on the meaning of the resolution. I explained it to him sentence by sentence. "If you agree to this and that in the interests of the Empire, no one can or shall cast a stone at you."

Michaelis: "Yes, agreement is all very well, though the words 'joint agreement' would please me better; an enforced agreement is awful. They will decry and repudiate the smallest concession as an enforced agreement, if our enemies appeal to this resolution. I can't say anything further, but it is not wholly impossible for me to open negotiations in the very near future. One must put out feelers far and wide," making a

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

great flourish with his right arm. "More I can't say, but I know this—that this resolution makes things very awkward."

I again tried to pacify him and get him to approve of the resolution.

Michaelis: "I thought you and the Supreme Command were perfectly unanimous over the resolution. Had I known this was not the case, I would have thought a long time about taking office."

Scheidemann: "Yes, if you thought the Supreme Command and ourselves were perfectly unanimous, one must conclude that you would have had no misgivings in supporting the resolution, Michaelis."

Michaelis: "I knew nothing about it. I am unfortunately not so much in the picture as you and the other gentlemen. Hitherto, owing to pressure of work, I have only run alongside the political chariot as an outsider."

I was downright shocked. And this fellow was to save the country? Was he Bethmann-Hollweg's successor?

No one would probably believe me if I reported the last remark. Michaelis repeated it word for word later in the presence of all the other gentlemen! The new Chancellor then went on: "Anyhow, it is natural we should have another talk before I make my speech."

"I am pleased you said that, otherwise I should have asked you to do so."

Helfferrich came up to us at this moment. "Gentlemen, do not hold aloof from the rest of the company any longer." We went towards the other group, who were about to sit down. On Hindenburg's left sat Michaelis, Wahnschaffe, Haussmann, Ludendorff, Gothein; on the right sat Fischbeck, Ebert, David, Südekum, von Payer, Erzberger, Helfferrich. Michaelis now repeated all he had told me. The only new

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

thing was this: Was it possible to abstain from voting on the resolution, if his speech satisfied Hindenburg and ourselves? We Social Democrats promptly fell upon him; it was quite impossible. Hindenburg: "If it could be made a little stronger; it seems to me, if you will pardon me, too soft. Can't you leave out about force? It will have a bad effect in the Army." In the long argument hardly anything new was said. Our "outsider," Michaelis, ultimately declared he would write out a speech and try to come to an agreement with him over the telephone. "Then I will go through the speech with one or two gentlemen. I hope to be able to satisfy you by my speech without expressly stating what the words of the resolution are. Perhaps in this way everything can be happily settled." David forthwith chimed in: "Only no ambiguities; the old régime came to grief there." On our separating a general agreement seemed to have resulted.

Before nine on the morning of the next day Michaelis asked me to come and see him to go over his speech with him. He gave me the impression that morning of being a strong man. Many expressions in his speech sounded out of the way and showed me clearly he was right in his remark of being only an outsider running alongside the political chariot. He was not in the picture at all, and had no notion of what the feeling was abroad. He said to me, with the manuscript of the speech in his hand, "You will grant I must allude in my speech to the Army and the spirit of the Army. I shall show my appreciation of its efforts, then refer to the War itself and ask the question as to how long it will last. Then I will speak of its great victories—that we maintained our military position despite the fact of England having roused the world against us; in our consciousness of victory we could speak more openly than all the rest."

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Here I protested strongly. Every statement of being ready for peace would be nullified if we banked on our victories and our certainty of winning. Which of the nations seriously concerned, even though conscious of defeat, but would not feel mortally insulted if we talked in the way he intended? Michaelis looked at me rather astonished, crossed out lots of things and made notes in the margin. At the same time I told him he might maintain that we had always kept our ground with success though faced by superior numbers; but, beyond that, our entire position was bad. Michaelis read out a few meaningless sentences and finally succeeded in including in them what he wanted, more definitely. "We must secure for all time the boundaries of our Empire and the vital interests of our people. We should like a peace by agreement and on equal terms—a peace that would make a lasting reconciliation between nations possible. We cannot again offer peace after having been sent away empty with our peace offerings a year ago. If the other Powers approach us with any sort of peace proposals, Germany would be at once ready to negotiate, as she has said often enough."

He added then, "I will finish off the subject with this sentence: 'Our objects can be achieved within the scope of your resolution.'" I could then say I agreed, for he distinctly said he could not go beyond that, because he thought it would be absolutely fatal and involve him at once in violent quarrels with the Supreme Army Command. More could not be got out of him beyond his saying he would do nothing that exceeded the scope of the resolution.

I then asked him what he intended saying about home politics. Michaelis replied: "I have only been three days in office. You must let me have time, and I must first have a look round. My knowledge is comparatively very slight.

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

This I may say, in any case—that it is my firm intention to make relations between the People's Representatives and the Government more real and effective."

I replied, "That is not much."

As other gentlemen were being constantly announced, I tried to find out something about his plans for appointing a Secretary to the Foreign Office. Whom did he intend for the Secretariate of Foreign Affairs? It was without doubt the most important post.

Michaelis replied: "This matter is not yet decided. I am inclined to concentrate after the War on economic questions which are of the greatest importance to Germany. It is no good having on your side people who have grown up as diplomatists in 'goloshes.' We want men who know something about business. Here I must have a thorough look round. I will tell you how I generally set about a thing like this. Twice a week I shall hold long meetings at the Foreign Office in which pressing problems will be thoroughly discussed. I shall see very quickly who can do something and who can't. It won't be unknown to you that there are a lot of numskulls in the Foreign Office. As soon as I have got my bearings I shall make a clean sweep. I hope to convince the gentlemen that it is important to have common-sense; to have learnt diplomacy in 'goloshes' is less important."

A report was naturally made on Michaelis's speech to the Joint Select Committee, 17th July. Payer and Erzberger gathered impressions similar to mine. While Ebert found fault with many things in the copy of the speech, Payer was on the whole satisfied. It appeared, however, that Michaelis explained the wording of his speech to everyone he saw subsequently, according to the alterations he had made to meet

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

previous objections. Erzberger, who was liable to sudden impulses, proposed nothing more or less than that we should give Michaelis a vote of confidence through the Reichstag if he dealt faithfully with the matter, as he said he would, in a full house. We Social Democrats, along with Fischbeck, Member of the Reichstag, spoke very decidedly against such an extraordinary proceeding in favour of the new man.

The Wording of the Peace Resolution

The majority of the Reichstag, composed of the Centre, Social Democrats, Progressives, Alsace-Lorrainers, a part of the German Section, and individual members of other Sections, agreed on the following Peace Resolution to be laid before Parliament:

“As on 4th August, 1914, the words of the Speech from the Throne, ‘No desire for conquest urges us forward,’ hold good for the German people now, at the beginning of the fourth year of war. Germany has taken up arms in defence of her freedom and independence and for the integrity of her territory.

“The object of the Reichstag is to conclude a peace of understanding and of lasting reconciliation between nations. With such a peace, compulsory acquisitions of territory and political, economic, or financial aggression are incompatible.

“The Reichstag rejects all plans that may entail an economic boycott and foster hostile feelings among nations after the War. The freedom of the seas must be settled definitely. Only a commercial truce will prepare the ground for a friendly concord among nations.

“The Reichstag will energetically promote the establishment of International Courts of Arbitration.

“However, so long as hostile Governments do not entertain

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

such a peace, so long as they threaten Germany and her Allies with annexation and violence, the German people will stand together as one man, will hold on unshaken and fight till her own right and that of her Allies to live and develop have been secured.

"The German people is unconquerable when united. The Reichstag knows it has the sympathy of all defending the Fatherland in a heroic struggle with this resolution. The everlasting gratitude of the entire nation is assured them."

As I Understand It

On 19th July, 1917, Michaelis made his maiden speech in the Reichstag and explained his attitude towards the Peace Resolution. On this occasion he gambled in irresponsible fashion with the highest interests of the German people. He completely knocked the resolution on the head by his remark "as I understand it," which he put into his speech, contrary to all his promises. Members speaking after him did not allude to these ominous words; perhaps they did not fully grasp their meaning; perhaps no speaker wished deliberately to advertise them abroad, but rather give them the possible chance of a simple explanation. It must by now be generally known what grievous straits members had often been in during the War, who had been forced to speak openly. At confidential meetings and in reports the truth had been stated that the German people were dying of starvation; on the same day the same members had been forced to say in public, to mislead the enemy, that people were wrong in supposing that the Germans were not able to fight on till the object of security had been attained. Even if the critical nature of this remark had not been recognized fully, it is quite evident that Michaelis had grossly deceived all those with whom he dis-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

cussed the resolution and his own speech. The proof of this dishonest conduct in a God-fearing man was clearly manifest.

Ten years after the resolution was brought before the Reichstag a correspondence between the former Crown Prince and Chancellor Michaelis came to light, dated the day after the new Chancellor's first speech. The Crown Prince's letter described in glowing colours the good old days of the Empire and all their intrigues. One can apply to Michaelis's answer the proverb, "*Tel maître, tel valet.*"

The Crown Prince William wrote to Michaelis on 18th July:

"YOUR EXCELLENCY,

"I beg to enclose an account of what has happened between 10th and 13th July. This letter is intended for you only. You will see from it what an unfortunate part the Secretary of the Cabinet, von Valentine, has played in these critical days. I should like to give you a clearer idea of the Secretary's character. The outrageous policy of Bethmann-Hollweg, that culminated in the democratic Bill of Electoral Reform for Prussia, passed by the Reichstag against the wishes of the King of Prussia, would never have been possible if Valentine had not neglected his duties for years and had not failed to inform H.M. the Emperor of the real state of popular feeling. For my part I have given warnings enough, but he always laughed them off. He never understood how terribly anxious I was when considering the inheritance that one day would be mine. The complaints that have been reaching me for years from all classes of the population about the secluded life of H.M. the Emperor—the so-called Chinese Wall—were thoroughly justified, and every effort on my part to bring His Majesty once more into touch with the governing classes

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

among the people was wrecked by the opposition of the Secretary of the Cabinet."

After further complaints about Valentine, the son writes of his father in these terms:

"My father's personality is, unfortunately, too inclined to encourage things in this direction; it is very much pleasanter for him to work with his Secretaries than to receive reports from his Ministers."

He demands the supersession of von Valentine by von Berg, which later took effect, and then continues:

"The two other Secretaries must also soon be superseded. His Excellency von Lyncker, a distinguished individual, of moderate capacity, without any sympathy for the Army and hopelessly soured by the loss of both his sons in the War, is not suitable for his job. His Excellency von Müller, universally hated throughout the Navy, to whom the name of 'the German Rasputin' has been given, is also known to be a hypocritical bigot, and must be got rid of. The three gentlemen are thorough-going pessimists and wet blankets; they have a most depressing effect on the Emperor's spirits."

The pious Chancellor's reply to the Crown Prince's letter is very interesting. It is dated 26th July.

"ILLUSTRIOUS CROWN PRINCE! MOST GRACIOUS CROWN PRINCE
AND LORD!

"I most respectfully thank Your Royal and Imperial Highness for your gracious letter of the 18th of this month and its contents—especially for the extraordinarily interesting

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

memorandum on the events of 11th to the 13th July and the situation in the middle of July.

"I have now been ten days in office, but can naturally give no definitive judgment as yet on the avoidance of the crisis. The notorious resolution was carried by 212 votes to 126, with seventeen absent. Through my interpretation of it I stripped it of its most dangerous intentions. With the resolution as it stands we can make any peace we like. . . ."

The long and short of it is that the Crown Prince states that the Kaiser simply appointed numskulls to be his confidential advisers. But far worse than those whom the Crown Prince described in his letter to the new Chancellor, was this new man, Michaelis himself.

Meeting the Kaiser

Though we must not digress too far from current events, a few facts may be given which, we assume, will not be without interest to the reader.

Sooner than we feared, we were to have an opportunity of becoming closely acquainted with the most distinguished champion of the *ancien régime*, the Emperor William. Towards the end of the Reichstag meeting on 20th July, 1917, Helfferich sent us word that he was inviting the representatives of the Sections to an informal talk at 6 P.M. The Kaiser moreover wished to take part in the parley. Four from each Section were asked. The Section, after being informed, considered it quite natural that we should accept the invitation. David, Ebert, Molkenbuhr and I were chosen to represent the Section. On our arrival at Helfferich's, Südekum was already there, and the only one in a lieutenant's uniform decorated with the Iron Cross, with his khaki-covered helmet under his

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

arm. Ebert was furious; he had refused Südekum's request to be present, and referred to the Section's having already made its choice. Südekum then received a special invitation, as Ebert found out, as the deputy-chairman of the House Committee. Ebert was inexpressibly upset over this wholly trifling affair with Südekum, and prevented him from becoming chairman of the House Committee *vice* Spahn, who was to retire. I tried secretly to mediate. But Ebert attacked me bitterly when I proposed that our colleague Südekum should be asked—to calm his resentment—to take over the chairmanship of the Constitutional Committee, as I was tired of it.

The old greybeard Groeber had his joke about the "Sozis" being able to present their "one and only" lieutenant to the Kaiser, while the Conservatives could not muster even one. I said to the witty old man, "How envious they must feel!"

Now for meeting the Kaiser! First floor in the Home Office. Four to five rooms in a row—then a room in the corner leading to the garden on the right. In the second room were assembled the members of the Reichstag and the Federal Council with other guests. Wahnschaffe and von Braun, the sub-prefect, then employed in the Ministry, marshalled the "informal" guests. On one side were the members of the Reichstag, on the other the rest. . . . The folding doors were thrown open, and beaming like a tenor-star, accustomed to applause, the Kaiser, in a theatrical attitude, entered the hall. A few officers accompanied him. His Majesty bowed extremely low to the company; I caught a glimpse of him for a moment over a crowd of bending backs. At the same moment the Kaiser was conversing with Kämpf, Paasche and Dove, the three Presidents of the Reichstag. The conversation lasted a few minutes; then the Emperor went

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

on to a second and then to a third group, where the "Sozis" were. Helfferich introduced us. Südekum was our fugleman on the right, with myself on the left. When Helfferich called my name the Kaiser looked at me sharply, but quickly turned his eyes away when he noticed that I was in no wise inclined to sink into the earth. He asked Südekum where he had won his Iron Cross. On his giving a fitting answer, the Kaiser continued: "You gave me a warm time. The day before yesterday I intended going east during our offensive, but nothing came of it. Things went well. The Russians are now all on the run. They're having lively times in Russia. All the Russians seem to be firing at each other." With a long side-glance at me, "Revolution and war don't hit it well together." I looked away, as if his conversation did not interest me. Then he told us news we all knew before. Then he said very abruptly, "Who of you were in Stockholm?"

David: "We four."

He: "You did fine work; you've had a fine passage of arms."

There was no chance of getting in a word, for he went on talking without a pause, one word coming, so to speak, on the top of the other. We hadn't a chance of reminding him he was not talking to recruits. On he talked incessantly, jumping from one thing to another, as if he were afraid of someone else making a remark.

Then he spoke of Branting: "He planned the Stockholm meeting because he wanted to prevent you from having any direct dealings with the English and French." Then he came partially to his senses. I was glad when we had not to listen any more to his stale talk. I was absolutely determined that that should be the last time I accepted an invitation to similar "conversations."

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

We then paired off into the various rooms and talked with all kinds of men on all kinds of subjects. When the Kaiser had bored everybody "stiff," he went into the end room, where cigars were to be had in plenty. Helfferich and a few other big-wigs were talking with him. After a time Helfferich went in and out of the groups, picking out singly any favoured members of the Reichstag to take them off once more to the Kaiser. When he carried off David and Ebert he gave me a look as much as to say "There now, *you* daren't." I was heartily glad, and only regretted that I couldn't make myself scarce. The Kaiser's chatter with the members in the corner of the end room was so fast and furious that Ebert seemed quite upset when he told me what a hail of words had descended upon him and the others. "When **HE** has defeated all the others, **HE** will start a second Punic War and finish off England."

While Helfferich's selected victims had to endure the choicest idiocies and stupidities of the Supreme War Lord without getting in a syllable, the other guests stood round talking quite at their ease.

I formed part of a small group, after Sydow and Krätke, Secretaries of State, had left with Dr. Liesko, Secretary of State of the Law Department, and Count Dohna, the brave captain of the *Möwe*, well known for her plucky exploits. We had a splendid talk together. The Kaiser stood talking with his victims for a whole hour and violently gesticulating. I remarked cynically: "I am getting more respect for the monarchy; a monarch's duty is apparently much harder than I thought. The Kaiser has been standing and talking on the same spot for seventy minutes—that must be the deuce of a business!"

The two gentlemen looked at me first and then at one

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

another, as if they would like to ask, "Can you trust a Socialist? Must we not protest, or can we have a joke in our turn?" Their misgivings were soon over, for Liesko told the following story. "In his parents' home the private doctor of old Emperor William I. used to be a regular guest. He would often complain about the old gentleman's gradually increasing infirmity and the difficulty he had in getting him about. One evening he said again that it was hardly possible to take the old gentleman anywhere—"But when we once get him there, he will stand there for hours.'"

Interludes

Zimmermann had meanwhile sent in his request to resign. The Senior Clerk in the Foreign Office, Dr. Kriege, had summoned me to ask me seriously to persuade the Chancellor not to sanction this request. Zimmermann was perfectly innocent of all the charges made against him. There was no trace of evidence to connect him with the bomb outrage in Christiania. He could tell me this in confidence moreover, and Zimmermann called the man a criminal who rejected the peace I asked for, if it were to be got. I replied to the Director that Zimmermann was very favourably disposed to me; but he was seriously compromised abroad, because as Secretary of State he had been made responsible for events in Mexico and Christiania.

I ran away from Berlin to spend a few days out of harness. First of all I had to hold meetings in Kassel and Munich. In Kassel the meeting was held in the open air in the garden of the Stadtparkrestaurant; in Munich I spoke in the "Wagnerbräu." Both meetings were attended by many thousands. Professor Brentano, Councillor von Müller, Minister Soden, and many other influential men were present. My demand, to

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

work for a peace by agreement, met with unanimous applause, though the Schwanthaler Strasse, in which the blatant "Club for England's Speedy Destruction" had its white-liver sausage factory, was not two minutes off the meeting hall.

Now once more rest, perfect rest! I found it for a few days with my friend Josef Levi of Mannheim, who had a country cottage near Kohlgrub, in Upper Bavaria, lying a thousand metres up and standing quite by itself. No one would find me here and disturb my rest! I arrived on 1st August; on the 6th I was borne off to Mannheim, where I spoke in the "Rosengarten" to five thousand people. It was at least half an hour before a gang of about twenty men—Communist bullies, who had brought with them as their leader a terrible fellow, Sepp Oerter from Brunswick, could be brought to order. Except for a couple of dozen who were for "peace at any price," I was on the whole well received. I returned at once to Kohlgrub, but did not find the rest I desired, because so many people from the neighbourhood came to see me. Among the more interesting talks I had during these rowdy days was one with Lieut.-Colonel von Ostini, who came with Prince Reuss. As a diplomatist he had been in Copenhagen, and finally in Persia. Very pleasant, too, was my talk with Lieut.-General von Kühne, who was convalescing in Kohlgrub. He called upon me with his daughter. Herr von Kühne, who at once showed he had read with profit since his cadet days something besides military books, and had not seen the world solely through official spectacles, considered the Peace Resolution a great mistake, principally because it would have a bad effect in the Army. To all these gentlemen, no matter how sensible, artistic, literary and well informed they were otherwise, the Army was only really the "Officers' Corps" as far as the highest ranks were concerned.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

On 21st August I was again in the witches' cauldron in Berlin.

General Groener, one of the most sensible of officers—sometimes one had to think he was the only superior officer with any sense of the life, trials, efforts and work of the people—had been “sacked.” As Head of the War Office he had become unpopular with narrow-minded pettifoggers who had more influence. He was much too fair-minded with the munition workers, though he had frankly said that the man who went on strike in war-time was a dirty dog. The big-wigs were all suffering from blindness; otherwise they would not have treated so shabbily this distinguished man, who had always been ready in the most critical times to make any sacrifice.

In these weeks there was more excitement. Michaelis's gas bomb had exploded; there was much plain speaking at the meetings of the Select Committee, and in the Head Committee the Imperial Chancellor's double game was thoroughly discussed. He apologized in a way, but his conduct was disgusting throughout.

Michaelis and the Pope's Letter

Stockholm was a “failure,” owing to the non-arrival of the Socialists from enemy countries. The Peace Resolution failed because the Chancellor Michaelis tore it up like a “scrap of paper,” though seeming to approve of it at the same time. A third disappointment was the Pope's pacific effort, for here again Michaelis played a fatal double game. The Papal Nuncio Pacelli had called on the Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg to tell him it was the Pope's intention to approach the Kaiser with proposals for peace. Bethmann-Hollweg wel-

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

came this move. The Nuncio thereupon went off to General Headquarters to inform the Kaiser officially, and at the same time to draw his attention as a matter of course to the Pope's good efforts being made increasingly difficult owing to the deportations of Belgian work people. The Kaiser was apparently very pleased with the Pope's intention, for he said, among other things: "The Catholic Church, by reason of its international position, is the best qualified agency for ventilating the peace question, for it has technically the best instruments. The Social Democrats have recognized the importance of such propaganda, and were the first to have the courage to espouse the cause of peace. That would always stand to their credit. And should they meet with a rebuff, and the action of the Social Democrats be regarded as suspect, the Catholic Church would be forced to seize the opportunity that circumstances offered. In the interests of the Catholic Church it was an important matter"—he could say that as ruler of an Empire that was mainly Protestant—"that the possibility of a serious peace talk should be brought about, not by Social Democracy, but by the Catholic Church. If the Pope should refuse to act, the world would ignore him after the War and he would be nothing more than any ordinary Bishop."

At this interview with the Nuncio Pacelli the Kaiser bubbled over with his pretended knowledge of the military conditions inside the Vatican. "The Pope need not fear the mob. Sonnino or the King might be afraid of the Piazza, but the Pope sat enthroned high above the Piazza, and no Government would dare to lead the mob against the Pope. The whole civilized world would rally round the Holy See—not forgetting the Catholics in neutral countries. As far as he knew local conditions, the mob could not storm the fort-like palace of the Vatican. They would require 15-centimetre guns. The

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

"black shirts" would come to its assistance. Moreover, the Vatican had made preparations—there were stored in it 30,000 guns, twenty-five machine guns and a million cartridges."

The Nuncio Pacelli, who had more sense in his little finger than all the Hohenzollerns had in their whole bodies, was not a little astonished at this want of tact on the part of the Kaiser, but gave the only right answer by saying nothing. Hardly two weeks after this meeting with the Nuncio, Bethmann-Hollweg, who would have certainly backed the Pope's move with all his might, was dismissed and Michaelis reigned in his stead. It is evident from the Kaiser's remarks how badly the Pope was actually treated by the Ministers of Michaelis's Cabinet. In the draft reply to the Pope's communiqué of 13th June, on 14th July the Kaiser wrote in the margin, "Four weeks late! This is most impolite to the aged Pontiff."

On 1st August the Pope took further action. He turned to the Heads of the warring nations, whom he tried to win over to peace by definite proposals: Limitation of Armaments, Arbitration Courts, Freedom of the Seas, Abandonment of War Compensation, Surrender of Occupied Territory. "Belgium was to be totally evacuated by the Germans; a binding guarantee should be given for her complete political, military and economic independence by every Power. Likewise in return for the evacuation of French territory by all foreign belligerents, a restoration of the German Colonies."

Judging from previous events, there could be no doubt that an explicit promise to surrender Belgium was required from Germany in order to ensure the success of the Pope's venture. No responsible authority in Germany could have had any doubts about it. Should Michaelis at first not have understood that this was a *sine qua non*, no shuffling on his part was possible on 30th August, 1917. On this day the Nuncio Pacelli com-

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

municated to the Chancellor England's answer to the Papal Note of 6th August: "There is no probability whatsoever of approaching peace by the methods proposed, as long as the Central Powers and their Allies make no official statement either of their war aims, or of the reparations and compensations they are prepared to make, or and by what means in the future the world can be preserved from the repetition of those horrors under which it is now suffering. Even with regard to Belgium—on this point the Central Powers have acknowledged themselves in the wrong—no definite statement about their intention of restoring her complete independence and of making good the damage that they have inflicted on the country has ever been made known to us."

In the Note Pacelli afterwards observed that any further steps depended on a definite statement from Germany about Belgium. Everyone knew that ninety-five out of every hundred Germans heartily approved of a peace by agreement, but that certainly ninety-nine out of a hundred would have said no, if they had been asked if the War should go on in order to take Belgium in some way or other under German protection. And although (and this point must be stressed) the Reichstag had accepted the Peace Resolution some weeks before, in which any enforced annexation or seizure—any forcible occupation of Belgium, in fact—was rejected, Dr. Michaelis, in spite of this, prevented a plain declaration. Chancellor Michaelis alone cannot be held responsible for his action, for his fellow conspirator was without a doubt Dr. von Kühlmann, Secretary of State in the Foreign Office. Belgium was merely a pawn for Kühlmann that he would not surrender before the final peace settlement. Further, he intended, as we shall see, not to endanger any future negotiations with England by making a declaration about Belgium,

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

such as the Pope demanded, which would cut away the ground of these negotiations with England. Michaelis felt he was Ludendorff's right-hand man. No expedient came amiss to him that might lead to an intensive economic and military hold on Belgium for the purpose of these negotiations. He could never have made any declaration about Belgium without coming up against Ludendorff. Ludendorff wanted something more—military control of Belgium till an offensive and defensive alliance had been concluded with Germany or a long lease of Liège or the Flanders coast. Michaelis said in his letter to Czernin (17th August, 1917) that the Supreme Command and he were agreed that these terms, or something very much like them, could only be obtained by forcing peace on England. Can Michaelis really have been considering this possibility in the summer of 1917?

In a so-called speech from the Throne (11th September, 1917) in Schloss Bellevue in Berlin Michaelis made the following remarks:

"As to our aims with Belgium, His Majesty formerly approved Falkenhausen's idea: annexations as far as the North Sea. The situation is not the same to-day. . . . Belgium may be put on her feet again; the King of the Belgians may come back. The wishes of the Army and Navy commands have been often considered by me. . . . The Flanders coast cannot be held if Belgium is not annexed. He saw it was not possible, but its surrender must be connected with war reparations, otherwise this policy cannot be carried out."

While the Kaiser had his eyes at last opened by these notes, Ludendorff steadfastly pursued more extensive plans. Michaelis, for whom the Peace Resolution seemed to have lost all its significance, took the side of the Supreme Command. We will here call to mind his note to the Crown

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

Prince, "We can make any peace we like with this resolution"—"Any peace we like!" Little Charlie Two-Face in the chair of Bismarck.

The Committee of Seven

For the purpose of keeping private information absolutely secret the so-called Committee of Seven was set up, with the sanction of the Chancellor. From this Committee, that was differently constituted from any other Reichstag Committee, Poles and other undesirable members of Parliament could be easily excluded. The following belonged to it: Erzberger and Fehrenbach (Centre); Westarp (Conservatives); Stresemann (National Liberals); von Payer (or his deputy Weimar) (Progressive People's Party); Ebert and Scheidemann (Social Democrats). The first meeting of the Select Committee was held on 28th August, 1917, to consider the answer to the Pope's communiqué. The Chancellor, the Secretary of State, the President of the Reichstag, Kämpf, and a few other members of the Federal Council were present, besides those mentioned above.

Von Kühlmann stated that the Government had sent an *ad interim* reply to the Pope—"to gain time for framing the final answer." It was reported that the King of England had also sent an *ad interim* reply and the King of the Belgians; uniformity and firmness were therefore important factors in framing the reply of the Central Powers. If the four Powers were perfectly agreed in their reply, it would be a great diplomatic advantage. If it were possible, the first step should be left to the Entente Powers with regard to the reply, it would be advisable in many respects. Either the Entente would approve the Note or be forced to take on its shoulders the responsibility for continuing the War. It appeared that Eng-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

land was not unfavourable to the Pope's suggestions. France was up in arms against it, but was wholly dependent on England. Italy could hardly be opposed to the Note. . . .

As the opening speaker I emphasized the so-called idealistic point of view with which our enemies made great play. The one thing needed was a frank declaration of our policy towards Belgium. Wiemer and Fehrenbach supported me, while Westarp was averse to laying down any hard-and-fast line. Stresemann said: "If Belgium is mentioned, Flanders must be discussed and Flemish oppression by the Walloons terminated." Kämpf, who did not want to be less plucky than Stresemann, insisted on talking about Alsace-Lorraine if there was any talk about Belgium. Erzberger and Ebert advised agreement with the Pope's demands. Finally Stresemann attacked Erzberger, who advocated Belgium's absolute independence. The representatives of the Federal Council—Bode, Biegeleben, Sieveking—maintained a strictly diplomatic attitude; Belgium was for them too hot to touch.

The meeting ended with the Chancellor's summing up.

Agreement has been reached on the following points:

1. General approval of Kühlmann's views.
2. Special stress laid on idealistic points of view.
3. Nothing to stand in the way of negotiations.
4. The mention of Belgium to be considered, as it is likely to endanger peace negotiations if Belgium is not mentioned.
5. To wait and see what our Allies said.
6. Further consideration on the basis of our Allies' reports.

A Talk with Kühlmann

On 6th September, the day before the second and final meeting of the Committee of Seven, Kühlmann asked me to

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

come and discuss with him privately the reply to the Pope. He wanted me to drop my proposal of telling the Pope fair and square that we were ready to give up Belgium. In "The Collapse" and elsewhere I have written so fully about the course of the interview that the merest outline must here suffice; von Kühlmann told me again that an agreement in principle existed between the Chancellor and himself and all others concerned; if that were not the case, he could not remain in his job, nor could he remain in his job if he had to make a declaration against his conviction that could not be given after things had taken the course they had according to his account. Here are the arguments by which he tried to alter my view:

1. In three or four weeks negotiations will certainly be opened between England and Germany on the Belgian question.

2. Should we now make a statement about Belgium, our negotiations would fall through, as their *raison d'être* would be gone.

3. As I raised more difficulties than he had anticipated, he had to be more explicit. The Curia, he said, in no way insisted on the answer being made public. Negotiations were going on between him and the Secretary of State to the Vatican about Belgium, and the Pope was fully informed of the intentions of the German Government. He repeated that the Curia would expect an answer that differed in no way from the one he would lay before the Committee of Seven.

Naturally these were reasons that could not be brushed aside if we had any confidence in the Government and their supporters. I told the Secretary of State, whom I did not dislike

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

personally, quite clearly, in the course of the conversation, not to take it amiss if I said quite frankly that the whole business was the same old chatter all over again in a new form. I stuck to my guns, and firmly insisted that the declaration now demanded by the Pope, and long ago by the Social Democrats, must be given about Belgium.

With Kühlmann's consent, I reported what he said to my intimate friends, as well as to the combined Select Committee. His answer to my express question as to how far I could go was this: "You can say anything about what you believe to be non-confidential. Of course you must not mention the negotiations I have told you about." From the notes I made directly after the interview, I reported to my friends and the Committee the next morning. Herr von Kühlmann later repeatedly denied having told me anything about communication No. 3. No one can have believed him—that I could have invented such a fact (and so make my position in the Belgian question still harder) no serious person could credit. Kühlmann probably told a diplomatic lie to help himself out, as he wanted me by hook or by crook to abandon my demand. It was certainly not the first untruth the Foreign Office told to accomplish its object. The absolute truth of my report on Kühlmann's facts can be proved by the following notes on the sittings of the combined Select Committee and the Committee of Seven, as well as by my own diaries. We can dispense with explanatory remarks, because the words used can be compared with previous reports—in the first place, Erzberger's remarks on his interview with Kühlmann as well as transactions between the Foreign Office and the Curia, and then, again, Kühlmann's speech at the afternoon sitting of the Committee of Seven.

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

SITTING OF THE COMBINED SELECT COMMITTEE

10th September, 1917

. . . Erzberger reported having spoken with Kühlmann. But he only knew, as was very quickly evident, what the Foreign Office had agreed upon with the Curia. Consequently he quite agreed with our demand that all mention of Belgium should be omitted from our reply. Scheidemann said this in his report on the discussion with Kühlmann:

“The only possibility of not mentioning Belgium would be an express statement, in the reply, of the intentions of the Government in the peace question, and should be to this effect—that it would adhere in all circumstances to the resolution passed by the Reichstag on 19th July. It would further be advisable to frame the entire answer in such a way as to express clearly how it was brought about by our co-operation. That would enhance the value of the report abroad—presupposing that the form of the Note as a whole should be such that we could assume responsibility for it.”

Gothein was incensed at the course of things, and spoke out, as I did the day before to Kühlmann.

Ebert took the same line. After the Reichstag's resolution on 19th July everybody knew that a forcible annexation of Belgium was unthinkable, and we should say so.

Erzberger repeated his willingness to make concessions, stipulating, however, that a reference should be made to the Reichstag's resolution, as Scheidemann had proposed.

Von Payer, too, was of opinion that no negotiations could be started till things were made publicly clear with regard to Belgium. It seemed doubtful to him, from what he had heard, whether the reply Note was the best place to make a public declaration. If Kühlmann's theories, of which Scheide-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

mann had spoken, had any foundation, the former would be exonerated. He should reserve his final decision for the afternoon. Perhaps Kühlmann would be more explicit. In any case he accepted Scheidemann's proposal that a reference to the Reichstag's resolution should be made.

Fehrenbach spoke in the same strain: "The mistrust we have felt up to now towards the Chancellor, and which is increasing, warns us to be careful. Similar mistrust of Kühlmann is not uncalled for."

David said that if confidential information had been given to the Cardinal-Secretary of State, the Committee of Seven should have been informed.

Erzberger said that the Government must clearly tell the Select Committee what it actually said to the Curia about Belgium. We must be unanimous in this demand. He thought it necessary that the Note should state in reply that it had been drawn up by the People's Representatives.

After rather a long discussion, in which Fehrenbach (repeatedly), Dr. Junck and Fischbeck took part, I declared: "What is to happen if the Government assumes all round a negative attitude? In my opinion it means a split between them and us. In any case I must claim the right of my Section to thoroughly discuss the question as to whether we can remain in the Committee of Seven if the Government takes no notice of our advice. . . ."

SECOND MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF SEVEN

10th September, 1917

Palace of the Chancellor. Present: seven members of the Reichstag, seven members of the Federal Council, Kämpf, President of the Reichstag, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and a few other Government officials. The Chancellor

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

was in the chair. Herr von Kühlmann was called upon to speak.

"The final form of the Note to the Pope has naturally not yet been settled, as the Kaiser must be consulted, and we could not arrive at any decision before again discussing it with you. Before considering the reply itself we would draw special attention to the difficulty of settling a Note of this kind owing to our being only one part of a Coalition. As the Note now stands, Austria has given her approval, likewise Bulgaria; Turkey, too, has assented, after being spared painful explanations about the freedom of the seas. America is the only Power up to now that has answered the Pope's Note. We need not say anything further about this reply, the tone of which has been generally condemned. It represents an attempt at driving a wedge between the Government and people, which is certainly futile. England's attitude shows the Pope's Note as being not unfavourable to the wishes of the Government. There are many fairly certain indications of this; the attitude of the English Ambassador in Italy; also the fact of a change of opinion recently in certain English circles about peace negotiations. From France we get unfavourable reports, but France is only playing a subordinate part. The influence of London in Paris is on quite a different plane from the influence of France in London."

He then read the reply aloud. It was fairly comprehensive. I could only copy down a few catch-phrases; anyhow, I had no chance of getting it down accurately on the spot.

Kühlmann then went on to explain the Note: "The Pope intended to create by this Note an atmosphere in which a discussion about peace was possible. The mention of Belgium has been objected to for cogent reasons." Then he told us in the scrappiest way what he had told me in confidence on the

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Sunday, said not a word about negotiations, and even omitted to mention any pending. It was quite enough to unsettle various members of the Committee of Seven. Von Kühlmann went on: If our Allies had not insisted on expressing their special wishes if Belgium were mentioned, he and the Chancellor would not have considered it possible to speak about Belgium now. He wanted to emphasize that specially, because it was no light matter to take this view when the Committee of Seven had been so definitely in favour of mentioning Belgium. But how did we stand with our enemies? We had occupied Belgium, and the Entente was in doubt whether we should completely evacuate it. One had been perpetually toying with the idea of our intention to settle there permanently. No matter how wrong it was, this apprehension of our enemies was a good weapon for us. They occupy parts of Alsace, they rule the sea, and possess our colonies; Belgium is really a good weapon against them. If we officially declared what was demanded, our enemies would laugh us to scorn. He said recently that we had entered the last year of the War and had read that Cecil had talked about the last phase. Things being so, we could not sacrifice Belgium. If it was objected that without this Belgian declaration there was no bridge over to other countries, he must reply that the Curia perfectly understood Germany's official silence about Belgium. Between himself and the Cardinal-Secretary of State secret negotiations were in progress. He wished specially to state that the Peace Resolution of the Reichstag passed on 19th July would be the sole guiding principle for the Government.

Kämpf muttered something about Asquith's question in the Commons about Belgium's fate, and said something unintelligible about the Chancellor's speech at Stuttgart, in which the partition of Alsace-Lorraine was mentioned. Then there

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

followed a pointless debate on Alsace-Lorraine, with the Chancellor and Count Lerchenfeld taking part.

Scheidemann warmly advocated mentioning Belgium, and advanced reasons that required a definite declaration, according to his opinion. The reasons given by the Secretary of State against mentioning Belgium were not conclusive. If he had others that might convince them, let him state them. (I hoped to draw him.) But von Kühlmann held his peace, as he had long since noticed that he had won over the majority of the Select Committee. I wound up by remarking that we should press for the consideration of our wishes. If the Government attached no importance to our opinions we should naturally attach no importance to our joint responsibility for decisions in which we had no decisive voice.

Fehrenbach at once made the widest concessions.

The Chancellor said he was in perfect agreement with von Kühlmann on the advisability of a clear statement on the Belgian problem, but it was doubtful whether that could be done in the reply to the Pope's Note.

Stresemann reverted to the Flemish question and wished to know whether Michaelis was of the same opinion as Bethmann-Hollweg. (Michaelis did not reply to this question.) The settlement of the Flemish question, in his opinion, was not incompatible with the resolutions of 19th July.

Von Payer: "The Pan-Germans will hardly be satisfied with the Note. That six of the seven members support the Belgian demand is significant. The hopes of the people are fixed upon it. Great discontent among the population is otherwise certain. Certainly all depends on how Belgium is mentioned. If you say, for instance, by appealing to the Reichstag resolution of 19th July that it applies to Belgium as well, you have done all you need for the time." He spe-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

cially regarded as a notable statement von Kühlmann's words: "The Reichstag's resolution of 19th July was the guiding principle for the Government."

Erzberger considered the Reichstag's resolution to be the most remarkable statement that had been made for the last three years. Ten days ago the demand for a definite statement on Belgium was justified; now it was not.

Ebert required the reference to 19th July to be put in such a form as would clearly define our position with regard to Belgium. What the Pope said about Belgium was quite reasonable. He could not admit, after what he heard the previous day, that the situation was any different from what it had been ten days before. The only thing was the wording proposed originally by Scheidemann and seconded by Payer in support of the resolution of 19th July. This applied to Belgium as well.

Von Westarp said that he must reserve his final judgment until he had been able to read the Note. He had no objection to the tone on the whole. But if in the reply it was stated that the Pope's Note was a suitable basis for negotiating (as he thought he had heard), then he would be forced to dissent. He did not see in the Pope's Note any suitable basis for the protection of German interests. The remarks on the armament agreement were very dubious. It was natural for the Government to say that the resolution, even with reference to Belgium, was their guiding principle. It was not so to him. He would abstain from making any public statement as to how far he disapproved of the reply.

A few members of the Federal Council supported Kühlmann's view.

Scheidemann said: "I must lay stress on this point—that we can reach no final decision until we have the text in front

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

of us. Von Westarp said he must refrain from making any public statement and was against anything being said about the answer being the joint work of the Committee. That is only possible where there is unanimity. It is clear how wrong it is to send delegates to this Committee who were opposed to the resolutions of 19th July. It is quite obvious that no unanimity can be reached if men are elected to such a body with the object of working out a programme—already adopted by the Government as a guiding principle—who are not in sympathy with that programme. We must be definitely clear about our action. If the reply had been ready in the final form to-day, I should first require a Government statement; otherwise I cannot give any definite assurance. I consider it, however, possible that we shall have to make a public statement to the effect that the declaration was passed in face of our opposition.”

Kühlmann said it was uncommonly difficult to please everybody. He unfortunately could not entertain von Payer's suggestion of only talking cursorily about Belgium. He wished to say emphatically that he was practically in agreement with Ebert and Scheidemann. Everything they said was perfectly right. There were differences of opinion as to methods. It was also perfectly right to say that there was no bridge over without Belgium. But this was the important point. He did not want to destroy this bridge. He entreated them therefore not to insist on mentioning Belgium. We should have more confidence in the Government.

Scheidemann: “We have none.”

Kühlmann: “Come now! However close the relations between the Government and the Reichstag may be, you must give the Government a free hand as to method; if not, the Government would be completely paralyzed.”

Von Payer: “I should have liked Belgium's name mentioned,

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

but if reference is made to 19th July, I think the Social Democrats should cease their objections and give their consent. What is going to happen, according to von Westarp's view, if we are not unanimous? Some way must be found whereby our co-operation and sympathy may be mentioned and the right given to every member to say that he was for or against this or that resolution—at any rate in the Sections."

Stresemann agreed.

Von Westarp said once more that he claimed the right of making a public statement, though he was not agreed as to details.

Count Lerchenfeld: "We are not voting on the question. The Government wishes to learn as exactly as possible from the arguments what views are entertained by members of the Reichstag. If statements are to be made, they must be made in a way not detrimental to the country."

Kämpf: "I think I can sum up by saying that the Government will adopt the resolution of 19th July as a guiding principle in regard to Germany's policy."

Ebert: "Before coming to a definite decision—just one question. We could perhaps approve Kühlmann's proposals if we are definitely assured of the Peace Resolution of 19th July being adopted."

Chancellor: "I may take it that your general assent to the resolution has been given. It is desired that reference should be made to the Reichstag's Peace Resolution of 19th July. On that we are agreed. I will insert in the reply words to this effect. Belgium is not to be specially mentioned. On the other hand, it is desired that the reply should state that it has been drawn up in close co-operation with the representatives of the German people."

Ebert and Scheidemann arranged with Kühlmann that they

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

should examine the Note before publication, in order to be able to say that the mention of the Peace had been put in the right place.

Von Kühlmann asked both to get in touch with Herr von Bergen, the writer of the Note.

Ebert and I went next day to Herr von Bergen. We could not, however, see the reply, as von Kühlmann had forgotten to tell von Bergen that we were coming to examine it. We were put off till the next morning. Ebert went alone to the Wilhelmstrasse, as I had pressing business to attend to. He told me later he had found the notice of the Peace Resolution in a position he would not have considered the best possible. Herr von Bergen had consented to talk with the Chancellor, who had already approved the proposed draft, and would ask him to agree to the notice being put in what Ebert thought was the best place.

Double-faced Diplomacy

The most important part in the answer to the Pope's Note, where the Belgian problem was "solved," runs as follows:

"In view of the importance attaching to the communiqué of His Holiness, the Imperial Government has not failed to submit the points raised to earnest and conscientious examination; the special steps it has taken, in close conjunction with the representatives of the German people, for considering and answering the questions put forward, certify how ardently the Imperial Government wishes to find a practical basis for a just and lasting peace in harmony with the desires of His Holiness and the Peace Resolution of the Reichstag on 19th July of this year."

The reply intended for the Pope was thoroughly unsatisfactory to me, not less so, naturally, to the Curia, to say noth-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

ing of the Entente Powers. It was so worded as to leave every loophole open for the Chancellor and his Jingo supporters. The Chancellor's attitude in this question I felt to be more than two-faced. We must give this matter more serious attention.

Let us recollect that Michaelis had declared himself in perfect agreement with von Kühlmann, as von Kühlmann was with Michaelis, and that von Kühlmann had definitely stated in the Chancellor's presence his agreement in principle with Ebert and myself over the Belgian problem at the second sitting of the Committee of Seven. Michaelis was said to be in favour of giving up Belgium. His answer to the Pope, despatched on 19th September, merely meant that Belgium should not be specially mentioned for reasons of policy. Five days later, however, on 24th September, 1917, this same Michaelis wrote a second letter to the Papal representative, the Nuncio Pacelli (as the public were informed by Bredt's inquiry many years later), after the official reply to the Pope's Note had been sent to Pacelli, to this effect:

"If we are as yet unable at this stage of the proceedings to satisfy the wishes of Your Excellency by giving a definite answer in regard to the intentions of the Imperial Government or give any guarantees such as you desire, the reason is that certain preliminaries that are a *sine qua non* for such a declaration do not yet seem sufficiently made clear.

"It will be the object of the Imperial Government to get a clear idea on this matter, and they hope, in case circumstances favour their intention, to be in a position to inform Your Excellency more definitely at no distant date of the intentions and necessary requirements of the Imperial Government, especially respecting Belgium."

Bredt says, quite rightly, that this letter was the real answer

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

to the Pope's Note and was supplementary to the formal but meaningless communiqué of 19th September. The Nuncio could have gathered from this letter nothing but a clear, negative answer to the Pope's definite question about the surrender of Belgium.

Bredt goes so far as to remark (and this was proved to be correct later) that, besides Michaelis, his Secretary of State, von Kühlmann, and the Kaiser knew about this second letter. Then he goes on to say: "It is quite clear that three outstanding authorities knew nothing about it, and these were Ludendorff, Erzberger and Scheidemann. If General Ludendorff did not know of it, no one in the whole Army can have known about it, notably Field-Marshal von Hindenburg. If Erzberger and Scheidemann did not know about it no one of the majority in the Reichstag, who voted for the Peace Resolution, can have known about it. But even if this or that member did know about it, the fact remains that the letter was not known to the Committee of Seven, and that is the point."

At the inquiry by the Select Committee, in December, 1926, I proved that I knew nothing of the second letter. If I had had any knowledge of this letter I should naturally have mentioned it in my book, "The Pope," that appeared in 1921. As it is now out of print, certain facts from it may be given to complete the picture of Michaelis's Government. In the first place must be quoted what the historical expert, Bredt, says in his report on the Reichstag's inquiry about Michaelis's policy:

"It was made clear to the Committee of Seven that a very explicit explanation about Belgium was not needed, and the general belief was that in reference to the Peace Resolution Belgium was not to be mentioned. There is no doubt that the reply to the Nuncio on 24th September would not have been favourably received by the Committee when it was laid before

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

it. Dr. Michaelis had, however, promised to submit the reply, and had also submitted the formal answer, in which there was no decisive statement. Why did he not read the letter of 24th September? This is a point where one is really afraid to draw the logical conclusion."

Up to now only a few facts have been given of the first interview between the Papal Nuncio and Bethmann-Hollweg and the despatch of the second (secret) letter to the Pope. These, however, are amply sufficient on which to form an opinion of Imperial diplomacy under William II., especially in Michaelis's time. But we can only recognize the entire dishonesty of this diplomacy if we appreciate one at least of the incidents that has been described in detail in the book mentioned, "The Pope." On 22nd August, 1917, Michaelis telegraphed to Herr von Wedel, then our Ambassador in Vienna: "According to a confidential communiqué from Cardinal Gasparri, delivered here by the Papal representative, the English Minister to the Holy See announced that the King of England received the peace proposals with the sincerest appreciation of the high and well-meaning motives which animate the Pope. The English Government will consider the same with the greatest and most earnest attention."

The Chancellor Michaelis remarked upon it:

"In my opinion our object must be to place the odium of any breakdown in the Pope's attempts to mediate on our enemies and put them in the wrong, as was the case with our peace movement in December of last year. I intend therefore to treat the affair in rather a dilatory fashion, to keep them waiting for the final answer until a closer knowledge of the prevailing opinion makes a practical attitude possible."

The German Chancellor was by no means in a hurry about peace. The chief thing was that he could talk freely after-

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

wards, and make others responsible for the failure of the movement.

A telegram from the German representative at The Hague said: "The American answer to the Pope's Note, though unfortunate in wording, is by far the most important peace move since the outbreak of war." Germany's representative in Brussels wired to the Foreign Office that the impression of a neutral Ambassador was that a desire for peace was more or less insistent among all Entente representatives. A livelier interest was evident in the American Chargé d'Affaires, who recognized that American interests would be best served if the Note led to peace at no distant date.

In the meantime the Pope's representative pursued his efforts. Dr. Michaelis, however, conducted the business in a dilatory fashion. On 21st September, 1917, a final attempt was made by the Pope to induce Germany to give way. It was reported by telegram from Rome:

"In the cause of peace the Holy See will not publish the reply of the Imperial Government until Berlin has said the last word on Sections 3 and 4 of the Pope's proposals."

On 22nd September, 1917, the following conversation by telephone of the Prussian Minister in Munich in answer to a telegram (No. 173) was registered at the Foreign Office:

"Have told the Papal representative that nothing more can be done. He seemed to have expected no other decision after our interviews, but repeated that, according to the view of the Cardinal-Secretary of State, as expressed in a telegram to-day, the Pope's effort in the interests of peace must be regarded as having failed. On the 21st he made another attempt to alter our opinion; he was rather excited."

Likewise on 22nd September, *i.e.* three days after the despatch of the first reply to the Pope that was discussed by the

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Committee of Seven, and two days before the second secret reply to the Pope that was not revealed to this Committee, Herr von Kühlmann telegraphed to the Prussian envoy in Munich:

“Through Herr v. L. I learn the Papal representative said to Your Excellency that we must meet the Pope’s proposals of mediation, especially because we were the people who wished for peace.

“Although Your Excellency opposed this idea, I request you to leave no doubt on this point—that the conclusion must not be drawn that, because we are ready for peace, we are to be forced into peace.

“KÜHLMANN.”

When Bredt says, in his article on Herr Michaelis’s policy on the Papal question, that here is a point where one is afraid to draw the logical conclusions, we, who have no good reasons for remembering the good old Empire days, will say quite frankly: One can understand why enemy Governments in 1918 refused to negotiate in any way with the Imperial Government. That other European or American Governments are morally vastly superior cannot be maintained, but this may certainly be implied: that they have not employed duplicity and dishonesty with such unlimited stupidity as has been the case in Germany under William II.

Feeling in Vienna

Directly after the first sitting of the Committee of Seven on 28th August, 1917, Ebert and I went to Vienna to have a talk with our friends there. It was evident the spirit in Vienna was below zero. Victor Adler was unspeakably sad, for he had made up his mind to the inevitable loss of Trieste.

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

How hard hit this poor fellow without a country was! In the hotel we had to fight for hours for our due rations of bread. The Austrians were our best and loyalest Allies—they were then at their last gasp; there was no mistaking that. Yet in Berlin many were chattering about annexations and Herr von Kühlmann was telegraphing that there was no necessity for peace!

The result of our Vienna talk was embodied in a resolution that was formally addressed to the Dutch-Scandinavian Peace Committee. It ran as follows:

"The Socialistic International has not been able to prevent war; this is their misfortune, not their fault. And if fault exists, to-day is no time to reckon up its extent or the share of each single country. And however it may be, it is the duty of every Socialist and every Socialist Party at all times and seasons to try and bring the War to an end."

This resolution was signed by Ebert and Scheidemann for Germany; Ferdinand Skaret and Dr. V. Adler for Austria; Bakany and Dr. Kunfy for Hungary; Mortur, Stein and Burian for Czecho-Slovakia; Grogorivici for Roumania; Tittoni for Italy; Dr. Tuma for South Slovenia; Temsytsky for the Ukraine; Zankor and Dr. Fjdroff for Bulgaria.

In these days all sorts of helpers and agents, authorized and unauthorized, were at work between Berlin and Vienna, between Berlin and Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden and Holland, likewise between Vienna and—Erzberger and the highest dignitaries of the Church. This was more widely known as time went on. One of these agents of the better sort was Dr. Victor Naumann. On his death, in November, 1927, the papers referred to his work in the War. Naumann was formerly a writer and a theatre director in Munich. He

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

had managed to a remarkable extent to obtain the confidence of the Catholic priesthood. His relations with the Catholic Church were excellent. In 1916 Naumann and I met for the first time. He had been warmly recommended to me from a trustworthy source as a reliable man. Being extraordinarily well informed, as was soon apparent, in political and even military matters, many of which he had forecasted with certainty, I naturally did not snub him, but rather welcomed what he told me. He was well acquainted with what happened in the National Liberal Section, with which he was closely connected till shortly before his death. But he was best of all acquainted with Hertling and certain Vienna circles.

Ebert and I were scarcely got back in Berlin from Vienna when Naumann wrote me a letter from Vienna, 3rd September, 1917:

"On arriving in Vienna I learn from Count Collorodo that the news [evidently given him by Naumann] of your being in Vienna came unfortunately so late that Count Czernin was not able to ask you to call upon him. . . . Count Collorodo tells me the Minister would have liked to see you. . . . The chief point of interest is naturally the reply to the Pope's Note. I discussed it with the Chancellor in Berlin and with Herr von Bergen, who wrote it. I proposed to both gentlemen that all the facts should be embodied in one pithy sentence only, without going into details, and should say that the Imperial Government was ready to negotiate with its enemies on the basis of the Pope's proposals. . . . At the Foreign Office they think it is sufficient merely to say: We recognize Belgium's absolute independence. I think quite differently. . . . Here one takes the view that the solution of the Belgian problem would be at the same time a strong reason for bringing our enemies to the Peace Conference. It would be very hard for

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

England to disregard the effect a definite renunciation of Belgium on our part would produce in the world."

This letter may be typical of those coming from irresponsible outsiders who, owing to their personal relations with Ministers (and nothing more), tried to work the oracle. Naumann was in his way an honest and decent fellow, but we Social Democrats, who had to be extremely wary of new acquaintances throughout the War, spoke only as having heard of him, and only occasionally dropped him hints about things that we wanted known in certain places. Naumann was moreover excellent company. I appreciated even higher than his other talents his skill in making punch and drinks of all kinds. Before going up to the University he had learnt the noble art of cooking. As stated, he had made a specialty of making grog. Lucky was the man who came across him in the War in Copenhagen or Stockholm. R.I.P.

Certain notes, purporting to be Count Czernin's remarks, were handed over to me at his express request by a remarkable man. These I at once brought privately to the notice of von Kühlmann, Secretary of State, on 29th September, 1917. I will quote a few passages:

"Germany must at last make some statement on the restoration of Belgian independence in an unequivocal way. She cannot go on as she did under Bethmann-Hollweg and now under the new Chancellor. All this shifty talk gets on everybody's nerves—even here in Austria. If the Government cannot make up its mind to speak clearly, the German Reichstag should force it. Peace is in the hands of the German Reichstag. The struggle between military and civil authority must be fought to a finish. We are ready for peace; if it is prevented by Germany's fault, I will take no more responsibility, and

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

things must take their course. It is all one to me whether I stick to my job or another takes it on; no one can 'stick it' any more. If we cease fighting, Turkey and Bulgaria will do the same, for we form the connecting link between Germany and them. Then Prussia would stand alone against the world. Tell everybody it is an extremely critical time."

Kühlmann described Czernin as a highly nervous man. He said, too, that if he took Czernin to task about what people said he had said, he would swear by all his gods he never said them. On my remarking that all hopes of peace were now apparently destroyed, he replied: "No, no; you can rely on there being something in the wind." He answered a further remark of mine about the Pan-German Press claiming the Chancellor as "their man" by saying: "I'm responsible for foreign politics and for Belgium as well. I say again I agree entirely with you, and I'll go on with it through thick and thin." I said I was sorry he was not prepared to tell everybody what he had repeatedly told me about Belgium; it would certainly do us more good than all this secret pettifogging.

A few days after this interview the Chancellor Michaelis issued invitations to a Parliamentary soirée that I had to attend as representative of the Social Democratic Section. About one hundred and fifty people were invited—artists, men of science, journalists and members of Parliament. Michaelis shook hands with everyone present, and after that no one caught a glimpse of him for the rest of the evening. He had probably retired to pray. The man's right place was in a museum, and not in the Chancellor's palace.

Secret Diplomacy to be Abolished

The abolition of secret diplomacy was an old demand of Social Democracy. It does not mean, of course, that every

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

letter leaving the Foreign Office and every word a Minister intends to say should be discussed beforehand at a full sitting of the Reichstag or at a Reichstag Select Committee. That is absurd. But a dubious policy, such as had been pursued by the Government before the War, and especially during it, must be resisted in the interests of all nations—for the reconciliation of countries and the peace of the world. The "art" of saying yes or no to-day to everybody, and of saying the exact contrary to-morrow as a matter of course, may seem politically sound; in point of fact, it is neither sound nor even Macchiavellian, as many artful people try to explain; it is a lack of fixed principle from which in the long run "no good doth come." It is quite clear that not only every politician, but every man may change his opinion or his yea or nay with change of circumstances. William Liebknecht once put this into words: "If circumstances render it necessary and attendant situations change, I would alter my tactics, if forced, twenty times a day." In this instance the question does not arise. Any reader of this book must be aware that the demand for doing away with secret diplomacy is timely and justified, if he reads the chapters dealing with the tricks and wiles of the Chancellor Michaelis.

Macchiavelli's book, "The Prince," has been often quoted by politicians anxious to cover up their tracks, and in justification of their own conduct, and very often misquoted. Max Oberbreyer, the editor and commentator of this much-read book, pertinently remarks: "To play a really outstanding part intelligence and talent alone are not enough; a great character must be behind them." There is a saying that politics ruin character. Used in this sweeping general sense, it is wrong, for deterioration of character is certainly not necessarily the consequence of politics. Yet if you single out special Parties in the

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Reichstag and examine their policy, you must come to the conclusion that reactionary politics do most certainly ruin character. Take, for instance, the German National Monarchists, who, on entering the Government of the Republic in 1927, clearly made dishonesty the principal feature of their policy. Can an honest man have any confidence in any Government in which the first fiddle is played by such politicians? Certainly not. Can it be expected from foreign nations that they should have more confidence in such a Government than the German people itself?

One indispensable condition for intercourse between nations is reciprocal confidence. Directly a State becomes mistrustful of another, consequences arise that affect both States to their harm. Trust among the old Germans was one of their most splendid virtues. Tacitus, whom young Germans are very proud of in consequence, has referred to that. It is not the purpose of this book to point out that German good faith was exposed many times in the course of centuries to sore temptation and repeatedly went to pieces. Many painful instances could be quoted, especially in Napoleon's days. When assent or dissent to the dictated Peace at Versailles was in the balance, and inducements by the Entente were rife in the west and east of the country during the most critical days of the Empire, German good faith stood the test in a splendid way. We may also congratulate ourselves on having succeeded in keeping the country together in spite of the ghastly end of the War and its other miseries.

Less pleasant is it to be always reminded of the violation of Belgium's neutrality in the summer of 1914, of the torn-up treaty and the "scrap of paper." Painful, too, is the deportation of Belgian operatives. For these misdeeds of the Imperial Government that we condemn as harshly as they deserve, the

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

prime movers had always one excuse ready—that they were forced into them by the necessity of war: *C'est la guerre!* But what are the subterfuges when foreign Powers ask the German Government whether its policy has been honest on the Peace Resolution? Was its policy honest on the Pope's Note? The most valuable asset of any people is the trust reposed in it. The Imperial Government could in the end find no trust in any country in the world. The Republic must therefore set about winning the trust of the whole world; it cannot tolerate double dealing, even in forming its own Government. A republic that allows itself to be ruled by monarchists will only be able to reckon on a very limited confidence throughout the world.

Agitation by Annexationists

The preparation of the Peace Resolution by the Reichstag gave rise to renewed hostility among the leaders of the Annexationists against Bethmann-Hollweg. Scandalous prints had been in circulation for a long time. The Peace Resolution gave what seemed a very welcome opportunity for establishing the so-called Fatherland's Party. In the outcry against the "Scheidemann Peace," the peace of surrender, humiliation and shame, persecution overstepped all bounds. The last thin thread hitherto uniting the German people was snapped by the Kapp-Tirpitz partnership. The Munich Club for the speedy destruction of England worked its hardest, but was regarded from a rather humorous point of view. In their unscrupulousness the German Jingoës went as far as to give the impression of having the whole support of the Supreme Command. This was really dangerous, because the name of Field-Marshal von Hindenburg meant for many the last hope for a relatively tolerable end to the War.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

The more Hindenburg's name was invoked in the strife of Parties, the more quickly would the last remnant of unity certainly fall to pieces. At a conversation with Frederick Naumann about a trip together to the Eastern Front, I drew his attention to the misuse being made of the Field-Marshal's name by the Pan-Germans. Naumann then spoke with Lieut.-Colonel von Haeften, Ludendorff's representative in Berlin, on the subject. On 11th September Naumann, meeting with no success, also asked me to use my influence with Haeften to stop the scandal. Naumann seemed powerless to induce Hindenburg to cut himself adrift from the unfortunate gang. I at once agreed, and went with Naumann to Haeften's office "Unter den Linden." Haeften was wonderfully cordial, and reminded me of a meeting he still remembered with me in Antwerp. He fully sympathized with my misgivings. He was authorized to say that Hindenburg and Ludendorff were no politicians, and also did not wish to be involved in political controversy. I replied that the misuse of the gentleman's name would continue till what the Colonel told me was publicly announced. I asked von Haeften to tell Hindenburg personally not to allow his name to be bandied about in political arguments. Herr von Haeften then said in so many words, "Between ourselves, I had a talk with him this morning, but saw it was not an easy matter to make such a statement directly, but we discussed it seriously, for, as a matter of fact, we agree with you."

As Hindenburg's statement was not forthcoming, the misuse of his name continued. Later it was made quite clear that Hindenburg was no politician. Let us hear what he said in a letter about the time of the peace negotiations at Brest-Litowsk. The letter is quoted in Nowack's "Chaos," but little attention was paid to it.

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

"Headquarters,

"25. 2. 1918.

"It has been said in Brest-Litowsk that I have declared for a peace without annexations and the right of self-determination among the nations and therefore was in favour of the Peace Resolution. While repudiating strongly such an imputation, I request you to protest vigorously against such lying assertions whenever you have an opportunity.

"VON HINDENBURG."

A Trip to the Eastern Front

An instructional tour to the Eastern Front, extending far beyond Riga, brought with it many interesting experiences. General Eichhorn invited us to supper with his staff. There were talks with the officers, who were mostly very keen on annexations and much opposed to the Peace Resolution of the Reichstag. On my remarking, while sitting at a table where General Sauberzweig was (about whom there was so much talk when Nurse Cavell was shot), that soldiers might think differently, they said we should see that next day for ourselves. We really did see something very remarkable. Some of us were taken off to troops entrenched in a wood. The news that we were present ran like fire through the wood. In a short time we were mobbed by crowds of soldiers. Then the whole folly—I won't say of the officers as a whole, but of those who addressed the men—was apparent. One of them said in a grating voice to the soldiers assembled, "Gentlemen from the Reichstag wish to see for themselves that the men are in favour of the Peace Resolution, which means after the War everything will remain as it was; that nothing is to be annexed, and we have to evacuate all we have won by our bravery. Is anyone in favour of this?"

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Dead silence prevailed in the wood, till I, to the utter amazement of the officers, said that we did not ordinarily collect our information in this way. "I will ask the officers to retire a few hundred yards, so that the soldiers may answer quite freely." Apparently quite certain of the men turning upon us, the officers actually withdrew. Then the picture immediately changed. Asked whether they, the soldiers, knew what the Peace Resolution meant, they answered with one voice, "To be sure." To another question whether the men were satisfied with the resolution, another "To be sure," followed. "End it! Peace! We want to go home! End it! End it!"

We then shortly explained to the men, now separated in groups, that it did not, unfortunately, depend upon us alone whether they could have peace or not. That was proved by the Stockholm attempt, to our great sorrow. We exhorted them to hold on, and asked them to trust us. We would do all in our power to arrive soon at a peace which every German would accept. We heard special requests and complaints about food, treatment, granting of leave, etc., said good-bye to the men in hearty fashion, and then reported to the officers, who now came back, that they were not adequately informed about the spirit of their men. They were not a little surprised, and many of them made very wry faces.

It should be distinctly stated that in private conversation with the officers very sensible remarks were heard, and agreement with our intentions of making peace as soon as possible was very often warmly expressed.

A Dove of Peace from the North?

Borgbjerg telegraphed to me on 4th October, 1917, from Copenhagen to come as quickly as I could. "It is about the

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

peace problem; I am going to Stockholm to-night to a meeting of the Dutch-Scandinavian Peace Committee." On the evening of 6th October I was at Borgbjerg's house. He had returned the same day from Stockholm, and here in his house once more a meeting of our—still only *our*—Peace Committee was held. "For four days the Committee had tinkered at a report by good old Troelstra, which he called the Memorandum of all Memoranda." But Troelstra had asked me to come for a reason he thought more serious than this. Here is a summary on what Borgbjerg told me and of my experiences:

The Copenhagen lawyer H., and one of his clients, a Hungarian landowner millionaire, devoted seemingly to the cause of peace from purely ideal motives, intended asking me to take part in a really serious attempt for peace. The proposition came from an English source—at first indirectly, but later directly, as was openly stated. Lawyer H. was counsel for the English delegates in Copenhagen, and a Danish Minister in office was his brother-in-law. Long and strictly private talks took place at Borgbjerg's house. The negotiations sometimes assumed an extremely interesting character. I had confidential chats with the German Minister, von Brockdorff-Rantzau, in Copenhagen, and the Foreign Secretary in Berlin. Both naturally advised the greatest caution, but were in favour of the conversations. On 8th October there was another meeting between H. and W. on one side, and Borgbjerg and me on the other. To my question to W. whether he had anything new to tell me, he replied: "Something very important indeed, I think." He could only discuss it with me privately—his lawyer H. could be present, as he knew all about it. I declined the offer, naturally—if he thought it absolutely necessary, we two could talk together, or all four together. We two then had a talk, and Borgbjerg and H. left the room. H. made one

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

stipulation. If the often-discussed meeting between English and German representatives should take place it must be at once stated that the initiative was taken by a neutral, and not by an Englishman. The rest of the six points he mentioned concerned terms of peace that I have often discussed in another connection, and have given in this book. I do not need to enter further into that. I will only say that Belgium was the crucial question. About Belgium I had to state that it would be handed back *in toto* and completely restored. The restoration also included the return of machinery commandeered from the Belgian factories. This could be linked up with the discussion on the German colonies. We were soon agreed about the six points being made the basis of conversation suggested by W. and H. We arranged matters thus. Up to 12th October I was to wire W. whether I could be in Copenhagen on the 23rd of the same month. In a code not understood by others I was to mention the name of a retired statesman who could come (with the consent of the German Government). After the receipt of such a telegram I was to be informed within forty-eight hours whether the other side would come or not, and, if so, who would represent them.

After H. and W. had taken leave, Borgbjerg told me of the talk he had had in the other room with H. The previous evening W. had telegraphed to England, and had to-day received a reply from there. The English delegates in Copenhagen were informed. Borgbjerg and I were agreed to wait, as we could not yet be quite certain of the sincerity of these gentlemen. The Party Executive, to which reported directly after my return, approved of my action in Copenhagen, and assented to my proposal not to let negotiations on our side come to naught, but to work on further with caution, so that we could not be reproached with neglecting the slightest pos-

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

sibility of negotiating. From the other side there was a constant interchange of telegrams between H., the lawyer and myself. I broke off communications when Count Brockdorff-Rantzau sent me word, through a friend, that he had good grounds for asking me to cry off: "From the other side undesirable people might butt in." One more straw had floated away.

A Party Congress During the War

The Congress arranged by the Executive of the S.P.D. for the autumn of 1914 had not been able to be summoned because of the outbreak of war. The holding of a Congress had been often mentioned, but it had not been found practicable. In the autumn of 1917 the Party was able to meet at Würzburg from the 14th to the 20th October. The voluminous agenda of this Congress is one of the most interesting documents in the history of Social Democracy. In the reports of the Party Executive and the Reichstag Section the work of the S.P.D. is exhaustively and clearly described. Excellent essays on the work of the Party were sent in before the actual agenda. Landsberg wrote on the progress of democracy, Heinrich Cuno on economics, William Keil on finance, and Rudolf Wissel on social politics. These theses are the basis of my review on "The Immediate Tasks of the Party."

Ebert described in an excellent speech the policy of the Party in the War. He criticized especially the methods of the Opposition, that had been often employed in the Party discussions, and finally caused a split. "It is this poisonous and hateful method of fighting that has systematically driven a wedge into Party unity." But, in spite of it, he was full of hope:

"Our enemies are triumphing; the International and Social

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Democracy are bankrupt. I have no fears for the future of Social Democracy. The War has taught us many a bitter lesson. We have had to learn many things, but have not surrendered one jot or tittle of our principles. The War has made frightful inroads on the destinies of nations, but he who thinks he can construct his policy in future on international animosity will be doomed to bitter disappointment. Only ask our soldiers at the front what they think about the Chauvinism of our Philistines, Professors and war profiteers. . . .

"The great task for the future will be to restore with relentless logic the unity and determination of the Party. The dour struggle of the future will sweep away poverty and the paralysis of the fighting strength of the working classes. Stern necessity will rally the working classes round the banner of the old Social Democracy, that still is what it was—the party of class conflict, the herald and guide in the fight for freedom by the working classes."

From my speech on the duties of the Party a few sentences may be given, from which it can be seen that neither the S.P.D. in general nor its leaders in particular cherished any illusions about the times immediately following the War:

"During the War a displacement of power has occurred to the advantage of the Proletariate—a displacement on the brink of which we are standing, and through the fight of the masses, that developed in the midst of hostilities, Social Democracy has won quite a different status to what it had before the War. German Democracy—I say it quite frankly—has become a Party with a direct prospect of supremacy in the State. The Parliamentary system will carry through this or that, and Germany after the War will be a Parliamentary democratic State. And it will be with us, as it is with England, that the Party which possesses a majority of seats in

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

Parliament will have to set up the Government and be responsible for it. . . .

“Can any of us wish that Germany in post-war days should be governed by an anti-democratic Block in which Conservatives, Jingoese and Pan-Germans have control? The answer to this question is obvious; hence we must fight at the first elections after the War and in all subsequent elections for political power—real political power—for decisive influence in the State and for the Government itself. The problem of a socialistic form of society looms up before us in all its vastness. A gigantic burden has been laid upon our shoulders. We must no longer be theoreticians and agitators, which we were mostly, generally speaking, but practical Socialists. We must not forget that Socialism is not a thing in itself, but only a means to an end (*applause*), a means of fighting poverty and of advancing the material and moral well-being of the people. We shall have to avoid the error of riding principles to death, and shall not only consider every step carefully to see whether it is socialistic, but shall also consider whether it is practical (“hear, hear”). By applying our principles in the wrong way and in the wrong place, we should only do harm to those principles. We shall only be of use where and when we can show that Socialistic principles offer practical benefits to the masses. . . .

“We will be quite sincere, and say to ourselves that we—or, to be more correct, a small part of our people with their peculiar way of thinking—are not altogether free from responsibility for the universal hatred seething round us. This must be removed. Post-war Germany must be so created that no doubt can be entertained of the independence of her policy at home and the pacificism, honesty and candour of her policy abroad. What lies before us is not easy by any means. War—

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

that traditional old thing, the recurrence of the same bugbear—only exaggerated into lunacy by the progress of technical skill. But what we want and what we struggle for is what is big, new and has never been heard of—the advance of all mankind to a higher level of international comity and Socialism.

“We will not hide from ourselves that the heaviest task will fall to us in these changing circumstances. But has this war not shown what a nation can do when it is forced? After the War the slogan for us is, ‘We must!’ Peace—this does not mean that every struggle must cease; it only means that we shall not fight each other like brute beasts, but like civilized nations. When out there the last shot has been fired, we will shout, ‘War is dead. Long live the struggle! Long live work and the fight for the right!’ We will march on—if it must be, then we will rush—forward!”

The feeling at this Congress was quite harmonious. The S.P.D. stood united behind their leaders. The desire for a reunion with their old comrades of the Independent Socialist Party was already felt, but no one was deluded into thinking that this reunion would be possible as long as their great differences on war questions still persisted.

The Würzburg Conference achieved quite a practical political result. In my concluding words I stressed the necessity for the spread of democracy, and said this: “This is perfectly clear; away with all obstacles that stand in the way of democracy in the country and Parliamentary Government. What must be got out of the way with express speed seems to me to be the Chancellor, Dr. Michaelis.”

“Boisterous and continuous applause” followed these words. Herr Michaelis, the destroyer of the Peace Resolution and of the Pope’s good offices, was soon after dismissed and replaced by Freiherr von Hertling. In the next section, “Princely Can-

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

didates for the Chancellorship," the reader will become better acquainted with the circumstances in which Freiherr von Hertling became Chancellor.

Princely Candidates for the Chancellorship

CONVERSATIONS WITH PROFESSOR LUDWIG STEIN AND

DR. AUGUST STEIN

Professor Ludwig Stein, the well-known editor of *Nord und Sud*, brought me an invitation from Prince Bülow asking me to go and see him privately at the Hotel Adlon. It must be said beforehand that a successor to the impossible Michaelis was in these days being discussed in the papers, and Prince Bülow, among others, was talked of as a likely candidate. Professor Stein was one of those men who were on intimate terms with the Prince. He was much perturbed when I declined the invitation. I persisted in my refusal, while Stein urged me most strongly in the lobby of the Reichstag, and later by letter and telegram, to accept. He proved himself to be an uncommonly keen diplomatist. I tried to explain my aversion to Bülow not only by the violent tussles I had had with him as Chancellor, when I opened the debate in the Reichstag on behalf of my Party, but also (and chiefly) through his work as Ambassador in Rome during the War. I had been informed of Bülow's proceedings, which made me think him quite unsuitable for reassuming the Chancellorship. Stein tackled me on this subject, and told me that my information was wrong and he could prove it. "Well," I said, "if you can do that, I will accept the invitation." The next day, 25th October, Stein had another talk with Bülow, and brought me a number of letters he had had from Bülow at this critical time.

These letters showed that the charges made against the

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Prince were unfounded, that he had never been in doubt for a moment about the difficulties of his task, and had done his best to direct the course of events in Germany's favour. The Austrians, however, had been properly "hoaxed." On looking back, we must admit that an Austria well fleeced by Bülow's plan would have been a thousand times better than an Austria crippled. Prince Bülow's wish to have a talk with me was now more strongly urged by Stein, who said very much depended on it.

On 26th October Professor Ludwig Stein rang me up very early in the morning, asking me when Prince Bülow could definitely expect me. I fixed that afternoon at four o'clock. In the forenoon I went first to a namesake of Professor Stein—the Berlin correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Dr. August Stein, to get a few tips for my interview with Bülow. August Stein, who had been intimate with the Prince during his Chancellorship, had often been his political adviser, as I well knew. He judged the Prince very harshly—he was undoubtedly a clever, highly educated man, but a slacker; his principal object was to increase his personal reputation; he was, moreover, a wonderful actor; certain speeches of his he rehearsed in front of the looking-glass. One special speech that Hammann, P.C., wrote for him Bülow had to deliver in Hammann's presence; he had to repeat it three times, as the performance did not meet with the Privy Councillor's approval. Hamann, Stein said, had told him all about it. Stein described the scene in the following amusing way. The Prince had to recite the speech, and Hammann instructed him in the way he should say it—"More slowly; now rather faster. Pause for a word. Faster, faster still! Now bang your fist on the table"—Bülow could not get rid of the fear that, after his fainting fit in the Reichstag, he would be looked upon as a sick man;

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

he always tried to remove this impression; he was especially fastidious in the choice of his clothes. Stein had a very amusing story to tell about Bülow's reception of a diplomatist in Norderney. Stein said he could not say now that he disliked Bülow. He was an intelligent man, and it was a pleasure to talk to him. I could be sure of his not feeling awkward with me. In the course of this interview a Government official came in, who confirmed all Stein's facts, and we spoke freely and confidentially about many of the candidates for the Chancellorship.

Stein continually reverted to Bülow, and to illustrate "the dangerousness of this charming Prince," told us of the following incident that he had witnessed himself. "The Prince always knew how to exploit Bassermann's vanity. At an official reception in Bülow's house, Bassermann was standing talking with two or three other gentlemen when Bülow joined them, beaming with pleasure. In course of the conversation Bülow suddenly said: 'I want an Ambassador for London; I know of no one better than you, dear Bassermann.' A delighted smile came over Bassermann's face, but the Prince added: 'How could I send you to London? You are absolutely indispensable to me in Berlin.' Bassermann was in the seventh heaven of delight. Through the Prince's kindness towards him in other people's presence, Bassermann was at all times and seasons his devoted servant. Bülow, of course, had never seriously thought of sending Bassermann to London. Take care, Scheidemann, you are going to a very dangerous diplomatist. . . ."

Interview with Prince Bülow

I went to the Hotel Adlon shortly after four. The Prince received me as an old friend, thanked me for coming, and

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

assured me he was very pleased. "We have had our quarrels in the past, but I should let bygones be bygones. . . ." I replied: "The quarrels we have had together seemed to me absolutely necessary, but I never bear grudges."

After we had sat down the Prince began. It was stated in some papers that his name was mentioned in connection with the forthcoming change in the Chancellorship. He had got nothing to do with it, for he had willingly left office and was not desirous of returning to it. He had plenty of hobbies to occupy his time—literature and art; he was also keenly interested in music (through his wife). But at the country's call he would not say no. He did not think the Kaiser would send for him. If he did, he would clearly say that he could not decide in ten or fifteen minutes, as Michaelis did, and wanted more time for a serious talk beforehand with the leaders of the Reichstag. The maintenance of the present majority in the Reichstag was an absolute necessity, and the co-operation of these Parties seemed to him a most happy state of things. He, of course, would only accept the post if he knew the majority was on his side. If, for instance, he heard from me that my Party and I personally would not support him, that would put an end to his standing at once. Without the approval of the majority Parties he would in no circumstances accept office. He said all that in such an interesting way, and in tones of such absolute conviction, that I once more saw Augustus Stein's amused face in front of me. It was quite clear that I should let him do the talking as far as possible and assume the part of the attentive listener. I replied that in my opinion the War would not be brought to an end unless the Parties worked together and the Government supported the attitude of the majority. "The majority certainly has not only the duty to make peace as quickly as possible on the

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

basis of the resolution of 19th July, 1917; it shall and must carry out its duties at home, in democratizing all our institutions and, before all things, must introduce the equal and direct electoral vote in Prussia. It is also necessary to speed up things in the social-political field."

Prince Bülow: "You are perfectly right; it is exactly what I think. You see now how I regard the situation." He would like to hear from me how my Party would view his becoming Chancellor.

"We are a democratic Party," I said. "I cannot at the moment commit my Party. I must first consult the Section and the Executive. It appears to me a little premature at present. Why put the whole of the Party machinery into action when you say you hardly think the Kaiser will send for you? I propose waiting till the call comes. Directly that happens my Party can decide in a few hours."

Prince Bülow was obviously surprised at my answer, for he hesitated a little, and said with a laugh: "Herr Scheidemann, that was a very wise answer. We will accept it for the time being. One thing, however, I must repeat: In no circumstances will I accept office without the support of the majority in the Reichstag. If your Party has any misgivings, I will let the matter drop. But let me add another thing. You mentioned social-political demands. It means the repeal of the Intimidation Clause."

I replied that he was clearly misinformed; the Intimidation Clause was not meant, but a clause should be inserted expressly stating that no workmen should be imprisoned for intimidation if they made a demand for an increase in wages, and, if that were denied them, mentioned a strike to get their demands granted. "It is primarily a question of abolishing Sections 152 and 153 of the Trades Union Act in the event of

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

more serious trouble. Section 153 should be expunged as quickly as possible."

The Prince thanked me for the explanation. What I had told him of the working of the Intimidation Clause was a scandal. He had heard nothing about it when he was Chancellor. He would naturally advocate the immediate suspension of Section 153 and the re-wording of the Intimidation Clause. There was no other way out of it for him.

Then I appealed to him as a wise and experienced diplomatist as to whether he saw any possibility of a speedy peace. I could not understand why the Russian Revolution had not given the German Government any chance of making peace with the Russians. The Prince replied that he agreed with me; it was quite incomprehensible that not one of our military successes had been diplomatically exploited. He spoke also of Belgium, Roumania and Russia.

We talked on for two hours and a half. I got the impression more and more that Bülow had really aged a lot, and was no longer a political power. He agreed with all I said. He thought all I asked was right. On taking leave, the Prince again brought into play all his persuasive arts. As we said good-bye he held my hand for a long while, and then went into the antechamber of his room, where he insisted on helping me into my overcoat. I naturally resisted, but he protested: "Well, Herr Scheidemann, if anyone were to see you helping me into my overcoat he would certainly remark: 'The Prince now can't get into his overcoat; young Scheidemann has to help him,' but if anyone were to see me helping you into your overcoat, then he would say: 'The old man is helping young Scheidemann into his coat, and he can still get into it alone.'"

Recollecting my coaching by Augustus

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

Stein, I thought to myself, "I know you." But I told him that a Prince had never helped me on with my coat before.

Interview with Prince Hatzfeld

The day after the interview with Prince Bülow, I had a conversation with Prince Hatzfeld. Austrian diplomats had got wind of my meeting with Prince Bülow in the Hotel Adlon, and were now trying to spring a countermine. A literary friend of mine of many years' standing who had many connections in Vienna sent me a pressing invitation to lunch with him in the middle of the day, and I could in this way talk things over with Prince Hatzfeld without exciting curiosity. He made a special point of this interview, for Bülow to the Austrians was quite impossible as German Chancellor, after his willingness to hand over half Austria to the Italians to keep them out of the War. At first I made fun of this invitation. I surely could not go on talking every day with every Prince who wanted to be Chancellor. Then I said to him in all seriousness: "There are, my dear doctor, people in Berlin who want to run Prince Bülow. I understand this old man Hatzfeld, whom I know in the Reichstag. No, no, I can't swallow him." What was his answer? Good Lord! why all this fuss about such a candidate? In Vienna people think the only chance of success in Berlin is to put up one Prince against another, and, bar Hatzfeld, they haven't any.

The talk at lunch was so unimportant that I only noted the following: "I know Hatzfeld as an honest and decent fellow; he struck me as being much more 'washed out' than Bülow. He swallowed all I said, and was ready to do everything should he become Chancellor. It was clear he knew nothing at all of social-political questions, and what he said about foreign policy was commonplace. I won't say he knew any more of

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

home than of foreign affairs. He said good-bye with this remark, 'If I have four years more to live, I shall have only two to live if I become Chancellor.'"

Two hours later I had an interview with an influential Privy Councillor in the Wilhelmstrasse. He told me that Kühlmann and Rantzau, the former as Chancellor, the latter as Foreign Secretary, were impossible together, as neither would act under the other. From a relative of one of the gentlemen I learnt in the evening that my information was correct, although they were "on good terms."

Meanwhile canvassing was going on for Freiherr von Hertling. As he was a Bavarian, he could not well be the Prussian Prime Minister; so he was only to be Chancellor, and Michaelis could remain Prussian Prime Minister. Against such a settlement we made a definite stand. Away with Michaelis before everything! Besides Hertling, the following were on the list of candidates: Dr. Solf, Peter Spahn, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, Fehrenbach, von Payer, Count Roedern, Prince Max of Baden, etc. Hertling was finally nominated Chancellor after we Socialists had not only turned him down, but also the Progressive People's Party and Erzberger. Erzberger altered his mind after his interview with Kühlmann.

Was the Kaiser Insane?

In the midst of our deliberations on the new Chancellorship, Erzberger came bursting in from the Foreign Office with the following news. The Kaiser had made a speech to the Presidents and Secretaries of State that had caused vast excitement. The Kaiser pointed to splendid victories in Italy, and declared they had been won not according to Hindenburg's and Ludendorff's plans, but according to his very own. Brilliant victories were coming! Italy would be knocked out like Russia. They

REFORM AND PEACE WORK

would get even with France, as she would come over to our side. When the War was over a military Bill would be laid before them that would make all the world wonder. Then would come the second Punic War, which he would conduct, and destroy England. He formerly thought about expelling Albert and incorporating Belgium with the Empire. He had given up that idea, for, in dealing with Belgium, we should get more chatterers, and we had enough of them in the gossip shop—the Reichstag. The Kaiser had once more talked of the second Punic War that he intended waging. In the Joint Select Committee we all thought that the word “insane” only inadequately expressed the Kaiser’s condition. The best thing would have been to send him to an asylum.

III

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

IN Russia meanwhile Lenin and Trotsky had triumphed over Kerenski. The Bolshevists were masters. Now was the time to conclude as quickly as possible a good and just peace with them. The Joint Sections Committee of the Reichstag were very busy with the question how best to proceed to secure an end to the War in the East. The position of the Social Democrats was the easiest. We only needed to point to the Peace Resolution and to what the Russians had declared: "No annexations, no compensations and the right of nations to self-determination!" The last was a knotty point, for many of the Conservative members, though they did not openly say so, were putting a little gentle pressure on this or that one of the border States so that they might join up with Germany on the strength of self-determination.

Resolutions of "representative assemblies" in the border States—grotesque travesties of representative assemblies—which had been passed in the course of recent weeks and months were to be recognized as national self-determination. We Social Democrats opposed every attempt at getting round the Peace Resolution, declaring that the Russians would accuse us of dishonesty, and that if force were employed only fresh trouble for Germany would result. It is not necessary to state in detail all the points that cropped up. Negotiations, on the other hand, with the Foreign Office must be mentioned, as these are important. Erzberger, Fischbeck, Stresemann, Ebert and I, as well as v. d. Bussche, Secretary of State, were pres-

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

ent at a meeting at Kühlmann's invitation. I here give the most important of the Secretary's remarks:

"As soon as Russia suggests an armistice, directly or indirectly, she can have it at once. The Government and the Supreme Command are agreed. It would naturally have a time limit, so as to come to peace as quickly as possible. The time limit could be extended. If Russia agrees to an armistice, it will bring pressure to bear on the Entente, especially Italy. Austria had agreed not to utilize Italy's weakness for making rectifications on the frontier, however desirable these may be. [What didn't the Viennese gentleman think possible at this time!] There are quarrels among the Entente Powers; Lloyd George has lost in prestige and influence; as long as Clemenceau rules France there is no chance of peace with her."

I rubbed it in again: "Though no direct offer is forthcoming from Russia, the German Government must in some form or other make clear to everybody that it is ready at all times to end the War." Erzberger supported me.

Von Kühlmann said: "If a suitable formula cannot be inserted into the Chancellor's speech that is already settled, he will make a statement that will satisfy you, either at the Committee Meeting or publicly." (This meant, as I wrote in my diary, that the Chancellor would not say a word.)

When I put a further question as to the nature of the peace in the East, Kühlmann said: "The Russians themselves have already settled the formula: 'Without annexations or reparations on the basis of national self-determination.' If then the Western peoples of Russia declare for breaking off from Russia proper, their wishes must surely be granted, even if they require support from us in some form or other. I do not think the Russians attach very much importance to non-Russian territory."

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Next day the new Chancellor issued invitations to a conference with the object of discussing with the members invited what he was going to say in his forthcoming speech to the Reichstag. Freiherr von Hertling was unusually excited on that day. After some general remarks that had no real meaning, he said:

1. "After His Majesty has taken the initiative in the Suffrage question, I will take decided steps, as a non-Prussian, to hand over generally the representative power in the Diet to his representative.

2. "Peace as soon as possible!"

I then asked him, "Will the Chancellor not state in his speech to-morrow that he is prepared to arrange an armistice with Russia as a matter of course? I presume that, but I wish him to do so in as clear a manner as possible, with a view to producing an effect at home and abroad."

The Chancellor thereupon replied: "I will make every advance, and specially refer to the right of national self-determination. I desire our living again in peace with the Russian people as speedily as possible."

Ebert then asked: "Will the Chancellor tell us something about the plans respecting Courland, Lithuania and Poland?"

Hertling: "Only a few words. What the papers say is not true; everything is in a state of flux." He once more referred to the right of self-determination.

Von Westarp and Heydebrand, sitting opposite me, were furious. Von Westarp kept on saying to von Heydebrand, "This is all settled—every word of it!"

Westarp's remarks were wrong, for Hertling's involved speech had not in the least satisfied us Social Democrats. The

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

repetition of the right of self-determination sounded more than suspicious, especially to us who had obtained reliable facts from influential Lithuanians. To stir up the Lithuanians, the Supreme Command had sent a message through Prince Isenburg and General von Freytag-Loringhoven to a Lithuanian deputation:

“Unless the Lithuanians voluntarily vote for an independent Lithuania with support from the German Empire, the Supreme Command will insist on the following settlement: the establishment of a new strategic frontier for Germany through Kowno, Grodno, Düna-burg; then the Lithuanians on the other side of this frontier can do as they choose.”

That this was not mere empty talk was clearly proved by the then Councillor of Legation, von Maltzan, later Ambassador at Washington, who had come from Wilna to Berlin. From his explanations, as noted in my diary (30th November, 1917), I got the impression of his acting in agreement with von Kühlmann in order to warn me to be cautious in my dealings with the Supreme Command.

Bolshevist Hopes of German Support

On 14th November, 1917, Dr. Helphand, then stopping in Vienna, was asked to come at once to Stockholm, because the Bolshevist representative there intended getting in touch with both Socialist Parties in Germany. In Russia support for the revolutionary movement was needed.

Dr. Helphand informed us at once, without ascertaining the wishes of the Bolshevists, that big demonstrations and strikes would be most welcome to the Russians. Ebert and I opposed this most firmly. Dr. Helphand expected nothing else. We told him to report to the Russians: “We have worked together to create a new Government that has bound itself

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

down to definite terms. We must refuse to attack this Government in the rear by demonstrations." Ebert and I were about to start a grand tour of agitation, in which we intended once more advocating a peace by agreement in opposition to the Fatherland Party. We could use this opportunity to speak more fully about events in Russia. Helphand could say in Stockholm that we would get suitable resolutions passed.

This was the result of our interview—Helphand went off to Stockholm and took with him a message of sympathy, written by me and approved by Ebert, to be handed at once to the Russian deputation. We further arranged for Helphand to wire at once to me what was thought of the resolution, and whether they could not telegraph their good wishes to our meetings to which the resolution would be submitted.

On 17th November a wire from Stockholm arrived to this effect: "Agreed. Long telegram sent off yesterday. Ask Bergen for it." I went off at once to Bergen to get the telegram. He assured me that no such telegram had arrived. We talked over the matter in Kühlmann's presence, who was fully informed of our connections with Stockholm and was urgently requested to see that our resolutions, when made public, should not be hampered by the censorship during our meetings at Barmen and Dresden. I again pressed the Secretary of State for a statement on Russian affairs. Kühlmann said that one would naturally respond to the slightest feeler. It was quite clear what the Government's reply would be. The Government could not possibly on its own initiative apply to Lenin now; one did not know how strong the gentlemen were and whether they would not all be locked up to-morrow. In our attempts we must not lay ourselves open to failure. We then arranged that in case a telegram should arrive from

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

Stockholm it should be sent on at once to me in Dresden.

In the largest available hall in Dresden, the Sarrasani Circus, I spoke on 18th November to several thousands of people, men and women. The resolution put to the meeting was adopted unanimously. The expected telegram did not arrive. Herr von Bergen assured me that the telegram could not have been despatched in time to Dresden, as a Government official in Stockholm had sent it off quite unnecessarily in cipher to Berlin. I was sure the telegram had been intentionally held back. The telegram, when deciphered in the Wilhelmstrasse, ran as follows:

“The Revolution in Russia has entered upon a new stage. Russia’s working-men and soldiers have wrested the control from the hands of those who have abandoned the peace aims and social objects of the Revolution. They have taken matters into their own hands, and propose immediate negotiations for a peace without annexations and reparations on the basis of national self-determination. Yet in Russia as well as abroad the might of Capital will rise up against the peace of nations. There is a long struggle still before us, that can only be ended victoriously by a common international advance of the Proletariate. The Bolshevik Government abroad has received assurances from French, Austrian and German Social Democratic Parties and organizations that the Russian Proletariate can count on powerful support. It has communicated this news to the Russian Workers’ Union, and sends brotherly greetings to all Social Democratic workers who are fighting for the peace of the world. They trust that an end will be made to this slaughter of their brethren by the unified resistance of the International Proletariate, and that the foundation stone for the realization of Socialism will thereby be laid.”

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Back Again in Sweden

The idea of getting into direct communication with Lenin and his friends, and thereby hastening the establishment of peace in the East, was a favourite one among us Socialists. Having received in these days a copy of a correspondence between Stauning and Troelstra, from which it could be gathered that Stauning was pressing for a Socialist Conference, I wrote to Stauning at the request of the Party Executive saying we were glad that he had once more taken the initiative. It was obvious that we should declare our readiness to take part in such a conference on the basis of the Memorandum passed by us in Stockholm. An indispensable condition was that the support of the Russians should be obtained for certain.

On 10th December, 1917, I stopped at Copenhagen on my way to Stockholm to have a talk with Borgbjerg. He told me that a Socialist Conference, advocating peace, might be anticipated by direct negotiations between Russia and Germany. Stauning, who was not in Copenhagen, had expressed the view that, if it appeared advisable for Russia, the Russian Socialists could apply direct to the Danish Party and ask them to arrange a conference. We then discussed the Russian terms for an armistice. They asked that all movement of troops on the German side from east to west should cease. In this way they intended to prevent a prolongation of the War.

In the course of the afternoon I accepted an invitation to a talk with Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, who showed he was excellently informed, and discussed the situation with me with great frankness—as always. The Entente representatives were on the point of doing big things against Russia with the intention of stirring up the Ukraine, the Caucasus and the Don Cossacks and getting them to march against the Bolsheviks.

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

America also was stirring. If the Bolsheviks could be induced to continue the War, America was willing to give them every help. Over-night I travelled to Stockholm, where Dr. Helphand met me next morning at the station to show me to an out-of-the-way lodging where I could better avoid molestation and dodge the police spies. Rietzler, our Councillor of Legation, asked me by letter and telephone to come and see him as soon as possible. He had received a cipher telegram that Erzberger and v. d. Bussche had sent for me from Berlin. These gentlemen informed me that the Entente would do their very best to prevent a separate peace between Russia and Germany. With this intention the Entente Powers would try to encourage a Socialist Peace Conference, as they thought they could gain time through it. In the interests of a speedy peace I should press on negotiations with the two Governments, but give up the Socialist Conference.

Erzberger's information was incorrect. I knew far better than he who wanted the new conference. Rietzler complained about Erzberger, who, by acting on his own, created great difficulties and had put him out of action for a fortnight: "Erzberger is like a bull in a china shop." He quoted one instance that made this comparison appear quite mild. Rietzler had had frequent dealings with Worowsky, the Russian representative in Stockholm, and knew him to be a very sensible man. Worowsky was the Soviet envoy, and was murdered later in Switzerland. To get in contact with him was the chief object of my journey. Dr. Helphand (Parvus) saw Worowsky every day. He told him I was in Stockholm and wished to meet him. Worowsky then said, "You and I are old acquaintances; I have told you all that is good for Scheidemann to know. I couldn't talk straighter to Scheidemann; but if we meet there is a danger of there being a great outcry

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

against me in case our meeting gets known." Worowsky was afraid of trouble if he had direct dealings with me. Parvus repeatedly entreated me not to lose patience; I should certainly meet him. As a matter of fact, we met twice—the first time by chance, the second by arrangement.

This second interview took place on 14th December and lasted nearly three hours. After the interview I made exhaustive notes, which Parvus looked through and passed as quite accurate.

Worowsky saw things in Russia in a very rosy light: "He even speaks of a definite class extinction in which the middle classes would disappear."

I pointed out the difficulties as I saw them: Peace and distribution of land! If the first did not come very quickly and the latter did not come at all, it would be all up with what he called "definite class extinction." In my opinion, it was the peace declaration that brought the workers, soldiers and peasantry over to the Bolsheviks. First they went to Kerenski because he promised them peace; then they forsook him because he did not keep his word.

Worowsky did not expressly admit this, but acknowledged that he had his misgivings and his personal opinion. He also very frankly acknowledged that they were in a difficult position, because they as "Maximalists" had to make the maximum of demands, although they were in power (*i.e.* were the Government). He spoke very openly of conditions in Russia. On my remarking that it was the Bolsheviks' vital interest to make peace as soon as possible and not create artificial hindrances, as otherwise the soldiers would spoil their game, he said: "Four weeks ago the soldiers had nothing to eat and no clothes; everything is considerably better now."

I then inquired: "If soldiers four weeks ago were leaving the

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

front of their own accord, because they wanted peace and land, will they now remain and be ready perhaps to go on fighting because they in the meantime have more to eat and own a pair of pants?"

He did not answer. Worowsky naturally would not say a word against his country. I expected this as little from him as he did from me.

We then turned to the attempts made to summon an International Socialist Conference. I told him what Stauning had told me and what we said in reply. At first I could not quite make out what he personally thought of the Conference. Parvus was very keen on it. Worowsky gradually acknowledged that, if negotiations about the Armistice, perhaps the Peace, with Russia were still a little delayed and a great deal was written on the subject, he reckoned on the possibility of revolution breaking out in all countries in the West.

I said: "Do not be under any illusions on that score, as far as Germany is concerned. Your policy is impracticable for us; it would be just as senseless for us to ask the English and French to do as we do. We are fighting for the existence of our country, the collapse of which—whether through the War or revolution—would reduce us to a position where the worker and Socialism would fare very badly for a long time."

Parvus: "I've also often said that as long as the War lasts there will certainly be no revolution. What happens afterwards is another thing."

Then I added, "That is obvious. No one knows to-day how the War will end, what the conditions will be, or what the Government will do, etc. At the moment it does not matter. Now is the time, I think, to cry halt, and as soon as possible."

Worowsky: "The Brest negotiations will never come to an

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

end; we ask that they be transferred to a neutral town.—You should not make such difficulties now.”

“The place, surely, is less important; the chief thing is their being successful, and in what way.”

Worowsky: “Public opinion has not sufficient control. Our comrades are incensed that the reports of the proceedings are published in Russia and no mention of them is made in the German Press. . . .”

“The chief thing,” I replied to him, “is that the reports on the course of the negotiations should be true. I cannot say whether the Censorship has stopped their being printed.”

Worowsky: “Russia is negotiating under the control of workmen and soldiers. The military are merely experts in the negotiations. Our negotiators are only allowed to talk Russian, so that every word can be understood by the workmen not knowing foreign languages.”

He much wished that the German democrats would do their best to get the proceedings transferred to another place; we should then be working for a postponement of the Armistice.

“Don’t, please, set much importance on such trifles, as long as the Armistice is unsettled,” I said. “It would certainly be a good thing if our Government were represented besides the military. —You could take that matter up. If you, who are the Socialist Party and the Government, would only induce your Government to be represented by its prominent members at Brest—if Lenin and Trotsky were there negotiating—Kühlmann would be certainly very ready to go to Brest.” (I had seen a telegram from Kühlmann in which he expressed his readiness.)

Worowsky: “I know indirectly from German official circles that this wish is expressed.” (Parvus listened more intently than ever.)

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

Worowsky said these words turning to me with a smile; he wanted to show that he knew the source of my suggestions. He then reverted to the negotiations for peace. He strongly desired the Entente Powers to participate. Russia would do her best to bring this about and make it easier for the English and French. Was there, he asked, any reliance to be placed on the majority in the Reichstag?

I tried to reassure him, at the same time expressing my conviction that, besides us, the Progressive People's Party and the Centre would be loyal to the resolution of 19th July, 1917, regardless of the actual military situation.

He defeated all my attempts to discuss current problems, e.g. the future boundaries of Poland, Lithuania, etc., by referring to the right of national self-determination. He tried to throw cold water on my efforts to establish a close alliance between the Russian Socialists and the S.P.D. Then an argument ensued over the policy and peace work of the S.P.D. He had difficulty in recognizing the work we had done as non-revolutionary, and, on the other hand, made no attempt to defend the French and English Socialists, whose tactics, I said, were quite unintelligible to us. I asked him finally to try to understand us, as we tried to understand the Russian movement from the conditions prevailing in Russia. Parvus backed me up. The argument finished with a discussion of the plan for establishing in Stockholm an office for the interchange of Russian and German telegrams about the state of things in both countries.

Worowsky took leave of us in the friendliest way, saying he must now be off on further pressing business.

Parvus and I sat for a long time together, talking over the various points of the conversation.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Every day we were finding out how impossible it was to be unobserved in Stockholm even for a quarter of an hour. Enemy spies shadowed every known German. This was very clearly proved to me the day after my interview with Worowsky. Branting's organ, the *Social Democrat*, a paper that was hostile to us, published an article about the public negotiations in Brest and the secret diplomacy in Stockholm. William Janson thought Huysman had written the article. He reproached me for being the cause, by my visit to Camille, adding, "You should have cut him dead." That would have been quite impossible, as I shall now explain.

As Dr. Rietzler had frequent conversations with Worowsky, which his friends naturally did not know of, and Parvus as well, and as I was kept informed by both, and could therefore control matters most accurately, I was soon able to regard my mission to Stockholm as ended. Dr. Rietzler had been most discreet. Had negotiations in Brest-Litowsk been conducted honestly and above board, something quite different might have happened. The dictated Treaty of Versailles in the form in which it was forced upon Germany later would probably have been impossible. It was, of course, out of the question to get into direct communication with our official representatives in Stockholm—with Dr. Luzius, the Minister, and Rietzler, the Councillor of the Legation, Dr. Helphand, Worowsky, and many other well-known political people—but it was possible to look up the official representative of the International Socialist Bureau, *e.g.* Camille Huysman, who was still in Sweden as Secretary of the Peace Committee. It was also part of my duty to find out how things were progressing with the new Conference, suggested by Stauning and Parvus.

I inquired of Camille, and Pohl, formerly correspondent of

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

the *Wiener Arbeiter-Zeitung* and the *Vorwärts* in Paris, accompanied me: "We on the Party Executive are without information about the fate of Stauning's proposal—letters and telegrams arrive late or not at all. What is the position with regard to the new Conference?"

"It will be a long time before anything is fixed up, for the English workers will do nothing without the French, and the French will do nothing without the English."

To that I replied, "Meanwhile the workers will go on slaughtering one another; we are not in the habit of shelving such matters indefinitely. I do not understand the policy of the French or the English workers, whereas our policy must appear day by day more clear and straightforward, even to our enemies—at any rate since the day when the secret documents relating to the Entente's plans of forcible annexation became known with regard to Germany. It is surely quite clear that we have to fight for the very existence of the country. What the Pan-Germans have 'gassed' about, these people are wholly and entirely responsible for. Neither the Government nor the Reichstag majority nor the bulk of the people have anything to do with it. So long as the English and German Socialists behave in this way there can be less talk than ever of any change of policy on our part. We want peace, but we do not want peace at any price. If the French intend going on fighting till they conquer Alsace-Lorraine, the War may go on for another ten years. It is absurd to reckon on Germany's collapse owing to shortage of foodstuffs or raw material, and to believe in a military defeat after Russia's *débâcle* is too silly."

Camille replied that he had pointed out a possibility of over-estimating Germany's economic difficulties. "England is flourishing!" (With a bright look which I could not imitate owing to my privations.) "England has a glut of everything."

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Then he talked of the secret documents that had been published.

Here follows what Pohl jotted down: "Trotsky's disclosures about the secret treaty with regard to the left bank of the Rhine were nothing fresh. Albert Thomas had already seen the agreements in Russia and had mentioned them in a debate in secret session in the Chamber of Deputies. It appeared that hardly any Minister knew of them except Briand. The Socialists created a scene. The French diplomatists concerned were shelved and Briand resigned. Poincaré could scarcely be approached, owing to his consistent unreliability. Camille then drew very unpleasant parallels: we could not in any way rely upon our Kaiser, etc. The proceedings in secret session were no secret, as reports of them had been sold on the Boulevards. Sembat in the *Humanité* referred after Michaelis's speech to the subject. Huysman said he had told the whole story of Thomas's action and the contents of the secret Treaty at the time in the Dutch-Scandinavian Bureau."

I made a full reply to Camille's remarks, here only roughly sketched, unfortunately, by Pohl: "If Thomas had known of the secret documents ever since the summer, it made the position still worse for the French Party. They attached no importance to them. What would he and his friends say if they were in a position to bring such an accusation against the German Social Democrats!"

Huysman abruptly changed the subject and discussed the treatment of the Belgians and Serbians.

During the interview Huysman said positively and definitely—a fact I must not omit: "I know that the idea of the new Conference does not originate from Stauning, but from Parvus."

Huysman, the Secretary of I.S.B., could scarcely have taken

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

a more one-sided view than he did at this interview. I was fair-minded enough not to forget that he was a Belgian and had no special reason for loving us.

Pohl later had another interview with Huysman in which the latter said, "Does Scheidemann think me such a fool as to believe him when he says he came here for information? He had not been an hour in Stockholm before we knew where he was living, and we know since exactly where he has been and with whom he has been talking."

Parvus later told me: "It is plain that Huysman is most closely connected with the English Legation. I know from an important individual in Copenhagen that my letters have been opened and read by the English Legation. In one of these letters to Stauning was the definite proposal for the new Conference."

As all official authorities gave us plainly to understand that any activity on our side was now undesirable, and as we had no inclination to be cut off from communicating in emergencies with one another, we arranged a telegraphic code in Stockholm that proved an enormous success. We picked out the addresses of friendly business people in Stockholm, Copenhagen and Berlin who might telegraph openly. Our code was so skillfully constructed that we could wire freely without anyone, not even the cutest decoder, being able to find out the key. On the journey from Stockholm via Malmö to Copenhagen I received a telegram worded thus: "Walter arrives to-morrow Helsingfors." The real meaning was: "Stop first in Copenhagen, for Radek is coming on Monday from St. Petersburg to Stockholm." Any other combination was very easy. In Copenhagen I could get much better information from Stockholm than I could in Berlin. If necessary, I could be over-night again in the Swedish capital, while from Berlin the journey to

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Stockholm took twenty-four hours. Radek had, it is true, nothing of much importance from Moscow and St. Petersburg to tell me, so that, through a further telegram from Stockholm, I was free to travel home.

In Copenhagen I looked up Stauning and Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, to give them information and get information for myself. In Berlin, in response to a pressing invitation, I called upon Under-Secretary v. d. Bussche. He wanted information for Kühlmann, who was already packing his traps for Brest-Litowsk.

There were then conversations with Troelstra in Holland that I had on behalf of the Party Executive, as well as numberless meetings in Berlin. The subject of these conversations was almost invariably the same—Brest-Litowsk!

The Peace Resolution and Brest-Litowsk

At the many official conferences held at the time in Berlin it was easy to see that the Peace Resolution of July, 1917 was being used as a decoy. To gain time was essential. Count Westarp and Stresemann supported every manœuvre for delay. The Section repeatedly approved of my reports and decided that no jot or tittle of the right of national self-determination should be sacrificed. It was to be declared as a slogan, if the Government made any concessions to the Pan-Germans. Between the decision of the Reichstag on 19th July and a few statements made meanwhile in Brest-Litowsk on 25th and 28th December a great gulf yawned.

"The position of the Chancellor is untenable if he departs from the standpoint he assumed previously," I declared. "We now want absolute clarity. We stand to-day for unlimited national self-determination. We desire nothing more ardently than that universal peace should be soon concluded on the

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

basis of the Reichstag's resolution. As it is not at present possible, we must be satisfied with a separate peace that we in no way wish to jeopardize."

In all the negotiations over Brest-Litowsk there prevailed a painful sense of unreality, especially in the National Liberal camp. They were trying to cloak their desire for annexation under the right of self-determination for the border States. As cats cannot leave off mousing, the National Liberal yearnings for the Russian border States came to light. The S.D. Section held a meeting on the afternoon of 6th January in which an unusually unanimous feeling was apparent that was put in the form of a resolution.

Meantime Ludendorff was hard at work to get rid of Kühlmann, who had not danced in Brest and Berlin as the Supreme Command had piped. The situation was the same as before Bethmann's fall. Ludendorff threatened to resign if Kühlmann did not go. Ludendorff was at this game when the offensive, planned by him, was to begin. Max Wiesner, a well-informed journalist in close touch with the Wilhelmstrasse, said to me in the evening of 7th January, "To delude the public, they are now using the same methods as in Bethmann-Hollweg's time: War Press Department, Stresemann, etc. The Supreme Command is trying to create the impression that von Kühlmann wants big annexations, whereas the Supreme Command only wants small rectifications on the frontier for strategic reasons. In fact the policy of the Supreme Command tallies with that of the Reichstag majority. The Russians are agreed to the rectifications." Von Kühlmann had acted disloyally at Brest by attempting to scheme for a universal peace with the connivance of England. General Hoffmann was concerned with Kühlmann in declaring an armistice. Von Kühlmann had persuaded Hoffmann into

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

thinking he would be the next Chancellor. Hoffmann's sensible policy had induced the Supreme Command to shelve him. The opposition of the Pan-German Press to the Armistice Treaty was inspired by the Supreme Command—Ludendorff had sent in his papers. The denial, a bungling piece of work, had been written by himself. The objective of the Supreme Command was the line of the Narew. Two million Poles therefore would be expatriated. They specially wanted the coal-mines in the Benthin district. The Supreme Command wanted also rectification of frontiers in Lithuania and Courland. They accused von Kühlmann of aiming at acquiring a large amount of territory in the East by self-determination, so that he, as an Anglophile, would have to ask for nothing in the West. If the nation murmured he could point to an advance in the East. In the West the Supreme Command wanted Longwy and Briey to round-off our manufacturing districts. At Headquarters Colonel Bauer was the evil genius. On 6th January, at Hertling's request, Dr. Solf was to put these questions to the Progressive People's Party, and to Dr. Wallraff, Secretary of State (of the Centre):

1. Were they prepared to give up their former programme along with the right of self-determination and accept the moderate programme of the Supreme Command (rectification of frontiers)?

2. Were they prepared to change the previous majority by eliminating the Social Democrats and substituting the National Liberals, and form a big Centre Block?

How the M.P.'s of the Centre answered, my confidential man could not find out. Fischbeck had strongly opposed both proposals on behalf of the Independent People's Party: "Such a Centre Block would be simply a Right Block, *i.e.* a reac-

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

tionary Block." Solf received the answer with great pleasure. It had been expected by Chancellor Hertling, who made up his mind to adhere to the programme he initiated when he came into office.

As to the Kaiser's view Max Wiesner had been informed, from an absolutely reliable source, that he was apparently calm, but concerned about the Throne, because the Pan-German Press were always croaking about the breaking up of the monarchical idea among the people. He intended getting information from Solf and Wallraff. His Majesty was earnestly considering whether to get rid of Ludendorff, and had selected as Ludendorff's successor General Woerysch, whom he received on 6th January.

In the Joint Select Committee, at which National Liberals were repeatedly turning up, the Centre, the Progressive People's Party and the Social Democrats joined forces to discuss the situation without consulting the unreliable National Liberals. This came about at the meetings on 7th and 8th January. At the first of these meetings this was most definitely stated, as I noted in my diary: "The evil geniuses who are working behind the scenes are Stresemann, Colonel Bauer, Colonel Nicolai, etc. Ludendorff's plan is to win a big victory in the West and stir up a popular outburst that will sweep away all opposition to the Fatherland's Party."

At 1 P.M. I read my report on this intelligence to the Party Executive. We agreed to keep quiet, but try our best to exclude the National Liberals from the Joint Conference.

At the sitting of the Joint Select Committee Fehrenbach declared the position of his Party to be as follows:

1. They were willing to maintain their standpoint of 19th July, but were satisfied with small rectifications of boundaries,

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

such as the Supreme Command asked for at Sosnowice and Thorn. Plans *à la* Ludendorff, by which about two million Poles were to be incorporated in the Empire they decisively rejected.

2. The political status of individual districts was the concern of individual nations; it was their concern whether they should adopt a republican or monarchical form of government; it was likewise their own special concern in any given case whom they should eventually appoint to the headship of their States.

3. A period within which the nations should give their decisions was of secondary importance.

4. If to-day, as had been told them, the Lithuanians in Brest-Litowsk wished to declare their independence, they were agreed to the matter being arranged as in the case with Finland.

5. The form under which the nations should declare their independence was practically all one to them; the Social Democratic Resolution of 6th January, by the terms of which a notification of assent could only follow through a Constituent Assembly, which must be elected on universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage, went too far for them. They had nothing against it, but it was not to be made an indispensable condition. We should not forget that a country of very primitive manners and customs and many dialects was concerned.

This statement of Fehrenbach's naturally gave rise to a very serious discussion, in which I, in accordance with my instructions, represented the S.D. point of view. Fischbeck supported me in nearly every particular. "A small rectification of frontiers should in no circumstances mean the sequestration

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

of the mining areas." A remark by Dove, the Progressive member, that Dr. Kühlmann, Secretary of State, had been got rid of, Erzberger said was false. He could say that because of a telegram he had received from Kühlmann the evening before. Kühlmann was up in arms at the imputation that he had broken a pledge. He had been given a perfectly free hand. The Supreme Command was now taking revenge for a defeat it had suffered in a Cabinet Council on the Belgian question. Erzberger added that Kühlmann was backed by the Chancellor, so that a Kühlmann crisis would be at the same time a Chancellor crisis.

Meanwhile the Jingoës again got swollen heads. Their highfalutin was past bearing. The January strike already reported broke out. The *Vorwärts* was suppressed. On 25th January, in the Chief Committee of the Reichstag, a lively debate took place, in which I especially attacked Fuhrmann, the National Liberal member, who always wanted to be a head in front of his leader, Stresemann, as far as the policy of annexations was concerned. This Herr Fuhrmann had said in the Prussian Diet: "The statesman who returns from the War without Longwy-Briey, without Belgium in his hand, without the Flanders coast freed from England's power and without the line of the Meuse in ours, will go down in history as the gravedigger of German prestige." I may say without exaggeration that the lesson I gave to this armchair warrior was a thorough one. I also addressed some serious words to the Government: We should never think of risking our skins for a Government that perhaps convinced us of its never fulfilling its duty towards the people. Unfortunately the influence of short-sighted Philistine cliques among the Progressives was so great that there were times when men like Fischbeck began

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

to wobble. At a meeting of the Joint Committee (12th February, 1918) Erzberger, Dove and Gothein, besides us Social Democrats, stood to our guns. All the rest were visibly wavering.

Herr Wallraff Packs Up

Anyone with the slightest sense of humour must have a hearty laugh now and again, in spite of our pitiable plight. In a sitting of the Reichstag on 28th February, 1918, Herr Wallraff, now Secretary of State for Home Affairs by the Wrath of God, delivered a speech in which he referred to the abusive literature from abroad circulated in Germany, and read out a few sentences. When Haase, then the leader of the Independents in the Reichstag, scoffed at Wallraff's remarks in his answering speech, I saw Wallraff searching round in his big portfolios, clearly intending to produce in public new proofs of the responsibility of foreign countries for the strike. I therefore earnestly requested the Secretary of State, Count Roedern, who was sitting near Wallraff on the Ministerial benches, to warn Wallraff to be careful. If Wallraff let himself be drawn by Haase, there was a great risk of Haase saying very nasty things. At one time, when Haase belonged to our Section, Ebert and I were repeatedly approached by people in "high places" with requests to work up agitation abroad. We got to know of certain literature the Government intended sending abroad, that was not calculated at any rate to pacify the population. I was not sure whether we had told Haase about it at the time; if so, it was quite likely that Haase would blurt it all out if he got the chance. That is why I asked the Secretary of State to put Wallraff on his guard.

Count Roedern looked very serious, thanked me for the hint and went again into the hall. Wallraff, after being warned

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

by Count Roedern, as I noticed in common with a few friends I had let into the secret, put all his proofs back again. It was like a little comedy at a Cabinet meeting. Herr Wallraff—"this legacy from Herr Michaelis," as I called him at the same meeting—had lost an eye out shooting and had a glass one. With the other eye he could see quite well and wore glasses through which he could not see more than four to six yards in front of him. While packing up his paper hand-grenades, he looked over his pince-nez in the comic way people have who can see quite well, first into the hall, then into his portfolio and next at Count Roedern. We held our sides, aching with hunger, and roared with laughter.

At the same sitting, where the first reading of the Budget took place, the terms were explained that had been made by the Germans at Brest-Litowsk, after violent quarrels, interruptions and a break off in the negotiations. The Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, Freiherr v. d. Bussche, read them aloud. He spoke of the terms that we presented to the Russians which had been accepted by them.

"Germany is prepared, under the following conditions, to resume negotiations with Russia and conclude peace:

"1. The German Empire and Russia declare the termination of hostilities. Both nations have decided to live henceforward in peace and friendship.

"2. The districts that lie to the west of the line communicated to the Russian representatives in Brest-Litowsk, and belonging to the Russian Empire, will no longer be under the territorial authority of Russia. The line is to be moved from near Dünaburg to the eastern border of Courland. . . . Germany

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

and Austria-Hungary intend to decide the future fate of the districts in consultation with their population.

"3. Livonia and Esthonia are to be immediately evacuated by Russian troops and the Red Guard, and occupied by German police till internal conditions guarantee security, and law and order are restored. All inhabitants of the country who have been imprisoned for political reasons are to be at once set at liberty.

"4. Russia concludes peace at once with the Ukraine Republic. Ukraine and Finland are to be evacuated without delay by Russian troops and the Red Guard.

"5. Russia will do all in her power to carry out immediately the orderly surrender of the East Anatolian Provinces to Turkey, and recognizes the abolition of Turkish Capitulations.

"6. (a) The total demobilization of the Russian Army, inclusive of all units newly formed by the present Government, is to be proceeded with without delay. (b) The Russian warships in the Black Sea, the Baltic and the Polar Sea are to be disarmed at once. Warships of the Entente in Russian waters are to be treated as Russian ships of war. (c) Navigation in the Black Sea and the Baltic will be resumed. . . .

"7. The Russo-German Commercial Treaty of 1905, as in Art. VII (cipher) IIA of the Peace with the Ukraine, comes again into force.

"8. Questions of administration are being settled. . . . Russia shall admit German Commissions for the protection of war prisoners, civilians and stragglers, and help them as far as she can.

"9. Russia binds herself to stop any official agitation against the four Allied Powers.

"10. The aforesaid terms are to be accepted in forty-eight

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

hours. Russian plenipotentiaries shall go forthwith to Brest-Litowsk, and there sign the Peace within three days, which must be ratified within two weeks from then."

The statements of the Government representative were received with storms of cheers from the Right side of the House, while the Left hissed with corresponding vigour. Directly after Freiherr v. d. Bussche had spoken I rose. In view of the importance of the Treaty of Brest-Litowsk and its effects, especially in regard to the grave dissensions caused by this treaty for the time being among the S.D. Section, a few sentences from my speech must be quoted, which will make my position clear.

"It is impossible to begin a debate on the political situation without bearing in mind Russia's great tragedy—a tragedy on the fifth act of which the curtain will probably fall shortly. The Chancellor has already told us of the acceptance by the Russian Government of the terms made by the German Government. It was not our intention—I am speaking quite candidly—it was not the intention of the German Social Democratic Party to bring about the present state of things in Russia. We fought to defend our Fatherland against Tsarism; we are still fighting against the Entente's policy of conquest, but we are not fighting for the partition of Russia, any more than we are fighting for the suppression of Belgian independence, or for Longwy and Briey. We consider it necessary to say to all the world that the policy pursued towards Russia is no policy of ours. A while ago in this House the Chancellor's statement that he was in favour of the right of all nations to self-determination was hailed with applause. . . . As the Russian Government has assented to the German proposals at Brest-Litowsk, and after what we have just heard,

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

the partition of the border lands of Russia seems inevitable. We doubt whether anything beneficial for the future of the German Empire will come of that; in fact, we fear the opposite. Mere protests against things we tried but were not able to resist are useless. But we think it our duty to say in this place that these countries should not be brought under German rule against their will. We think it also to be our duty to say again in this last hour that no state of things should be created that render a desire for revenge inevitable in Russia after the Revolution has spent its force.

"If our policy has not been pursued in the East, if steps have been taken, contrary to our advice, that according to our conviction do not conduce to the welfare of our people, Russian Bolshevism has largely contributed to this state of things. After Tsarism's defeat in the field, Bolshevism completely disarmed Russia, and has, at any rate in its early stages, taken not the slightest interest in the preservation of the Russian Empire. It has actually played into the hands of dismemberment. If it now asks us to try to make good the damage done by the Revolution, it is asking too much. We are still fighting in the West, and Bolshevist methods have not been so successful as to induce Germany to adopt them. . . . We do not wish in the circumstances to attain a dominating position which would force us to conclude a peace with the Entente on such terms as those on which Trotzky and Lenin are now concluding peace with the Quadruple Alliance."

Here we must say something further in detail on the Peace of Brest-Litowsk. As I wrote already in 1921 in the *Zusammenbruch*, mighty corner-stones might have been laid at Brest for building up a real and universal peace, or at any rate the

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

way paved for permanent and good relations with Russia. Political incapacity, diplomatic dishonesty and military desire for power prevented this. The part taken by the S.D. Party in this decisive action of German foreign policy was unfortunately a negative one. It was now clear what power honest or dishonest Annexationists could exert if they allied themselves with the military party. But surely a decisive "No" from the Social Democrats—a rejection of the Peace Treaty when laid before the Reichstag, would have been tremendously important and the only logical conclusion from the decision of the Party on 19th April, when we declared our assent to the resolution of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council and our readiness to make peace all round without annexations or compensations on the basis of a free national development for all nations. In the S.D. Section there was a violent wrangle: Should we say yes or no to the Peace? I strongly supported the noes, but was in a minority, as on many other occasions. Ebert put forward the view which was impossible to me, that the Section should vote aye, for it was not feasible to vote against the Peace Treaty and perhaps convey the impression that we wanted the War to continue. That was, of course, nonsense. Ebert had obviously in his mind some previous theories that really did not apply to this practical case. Ebert did not win through with his objections to my dissenting attitude, but he split up the majority on which I had counted, and gained the verdict for the group who had concluded, from our widely different views, that we should abstain from voting. I had later to make a statement to that effect on behalf of the Section. It was no easy matter for me. The statement was mainly to this effect:

"The aim of the Social Democratic policy is to end the

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

War after a successful defence of the country by a genuine international peace which, based on agreement, rules out the employment of military force. By this treaty at Brest this object is not advanced. The Central Powers promised to bring about an understanding with Russia on the right of self-determination for the border States. Directly contrary to this, they have demanded Russia's surrender of Poland, Lithuania and Courland. This policy of force in the East is opposed to the interests of the German Empire, which demand lasting, pacific conditions and close friendship between the German and Russian people. We must insist on the actual democratic right of self-determination for Poland, Lithuania and Courland being secured, so that lasting friendly relations between them and the Russian people are not made impossible. We cannot declare ourselves to be consenting parties to the way in which the treaty has been brought about by the exclusion of the Reichstag, or in agreement with material parts of its contents. But as the treaty has practically ended war in the East we will not oppose it. Owing to these considerations we shall abstain from voting. We approve of the treaty with Finland."

Differences of opinion between Ebert and myself on the Peace in the East occurred later. Troelstra had invited me to Holland because, it was stated, the English and French were now definitely prepared to take part in a Socialist Conference—the stipulation being that the German Socialists should notify their agreement that negotiations should be conducted on the basis of the Stockholm neutral Memorandum in the first place, and in the second, that the Treaty of Brest-Litowsk should be no obstacle to universal peace. The latter I thought natural; against the first proposal I insisted on our Stockholm Memorandum being made the basis for negotiations.

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

This I could not get accepted by Troelstra, who had, of course, been treating with the English and the French. Finally, so as not to make the Conference a failure, I consented, as negotiations over a memorandum are in no way synonymous with a recognition of this memorandum. Ebert attacked me on my return, as if I had committed base treason against the Party. He would not see that there were two different things—to be forced to accept, willy-nilly, an unsuitable programme as a basis for negotiation, or to recognize it freely. Wels supported me and warmly defended my point of view. Later Ebert acknowledged I was right, after a talk with Troelstra. The whole dispute was useless, as the English Government would not let Troelstra enter their country; still less would they let Henderson and MacDonald out of it to talk over peace with us.

How About Poland?

At a few meetings of the Joint Select Committee it was evident that Ebert recognized the attitude he had assumed in regard to the Brest Treaty as a mistake and was sorry for it. We had, it is true, peace with the Russians, but what was to happen to the Poles? The Committee had discussed the problem at many sittings. There were discussions with the Polish members of the Reichstag and with other Polish politicians. Statements were to be made by Poles and the majority in the Reichstag at a plenary sitting—if possible, with the approval of the Government. But mistrust on both sides became more acute. Herr von Payer thought it impossible that the Reichstag majority should bind the hands of the Government for future negotiations by a statement on the Polish question. To give the reader a glimpse of the difficulties of the problem, one of the drafts that had been made mainly by the Polish Count

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Ronikier and Friedrich Naumann for the Reichstag majority is here given:

DRAFT

"Firmly convinced that a peaceable and friendly relationship between Poland and Germany is desired by an overwhelming majority in both countries in spite of every difficulty, the Polish Parties concerned, true to their principles, are prepared to explore further the basis for a positive, honest and mutual understanding with the German people and its allies.

"As a basis for this understanding a political and economic alliance of the Polish State with the Central Powers is aimed at, that must depend on a recognition of mutual interests and vital necessities in war and peace.

"Both parties shall be prepared to undertake and discharge all duties arising from a closer alliance.

"Among the prime necessities of the Polish people are, in the first place, the security of the country's frontiers, the immediate organization of a strong national army, and the speedy construction of an independent Polish Administration. The parties concerned require for the Polish State the possibility of extending Polish territory eastwards with the full recognition of the right of national self-determination, but declare the separation of any territory belonging to Congress Poland to be just as impossible as any curtailment of the frontiers of the allied Central Powers.

"With the internal affairs of neighbouring and allied states we will not interfere, and we will similarly not allow any interference with a free and independent Poland after the conclusion of a universal peace.

"The speedy establishment of the Polish Army and the grant of complete home rule to the Polish Government are legiti-

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

mate demands that cannot be delayed. They are matters of importance for the mutual relations between Poland and the Central Powers, for whom it is a matter of urgency that the Polish question should be finally decided by a voluntary understanding with the Polish nation before a universal Peace Congress."

This draft, though much altered, was not adhered to. In another draft, which Ebert thought much better, reference was made to the promises of the two Emperors with regard to the Poles. It ran as follows:

"Recognizing the necessity of securing in the immediate future for the Poles a guaranteed, independent and free *locus standi* as a State, in accordance with the declarations of the two Emperors (5th November, 1916, and 5th September, 1917), we expect from the Central Powers that they proceed to securing the fixity of the Polish frontiers with all their power, the organization of a Polish Army and the speedy completion of an independent Polish Administration."

Nothing came of the long discussions in the Joint Committee on these Imperial declarations, owing to the opposition of members of the Government. Finally an agreement with the Government brought about a resolution. Trimborn, a member of the Centre, remarked as follows at a meeting of the Select Committee (18th March, 1918): "The opposition to the Government is based most certainly on Hindenburg's and Ludendorff's plans, which, I have reasons for believing, aim at annexing a Polish district containing about two million Poles. As things are going on in the East, so they will go later on in the West. Plans for annexing as far as Liège are in existence. The question is this: Are we going to fight this question now or later?"

Dove, an excellent fellow, one of the few Progressives who

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

might be claimed as a Democrat, was afraid of the Reichstag encroaching on the prerogative of the Government, and I spoke in favour of taking up the struggle at once. The Government was too weak; it wanted stiffening.

Fehrenbach summed up by saying: "We are perfectly at one on this point—we will have no annexations in Poland."

The Government's feeble policy gave rise to ever-increasing mistrust. At a meeting of the Joint Committee on 19th March I reminded Fehrenbach of his interview with the Chancellor, at which, according to Fehrenbach's statement, Freiherr von Hertling had said, with refreshing emphasis, in reference to the Supreme Command, "I have to decide—not the Supreme Command. I will tell the Kaiser so in the clearest words and, if need be, take all the consequences."

Herr von Payer, taking part in the meeting, declared, after pointing out the immense difficulties, that he was sure the Supreme Command would not carry out their Polish plans.

Ebert said next day in a very bad temper, "According to what we know now, we must almost assume that the Government no longer supports the right of self-determination. Things are getting in such a tangle that we shall soon be unable to follow them."

How differently we should have stood later had we torn up the Treaty of Brest-Litowsk and thrown it down at the Government's feet, as I wished!

If we had only kept our eyes on these Brest-Litowsk people—the Annexationists, Ludendorff, Helfferich, Stresemann and Westrap—from the start, our way to Brest-Litowsk would have been plain sailing. We did not, however, forget for a moment the wretched German people, whose future we intended saving. We ignored all these Generals in bomb-proof dug-outs and

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

would not listen to our warlike spouters at home; we looked at our Fatherland wrestling with despair. What was to happen? In a broken-down Germany the worker would have the worst time of anybody. No collapse, therefore! We must stand so firm that our enemies would have ultimately to prefer an agreement to a continuation of the War. If after playing their best card without success, the army leaders had welcomed an agreement, the fiendish mocking laughter of the Entente would be ringing in our ears.

"We can always come to an understanding!"—With this Fourth Form boy's wisdom our demand for a peace by agreement was invariably brushed aside by Ludendorff's supporters.

Our Councillor of Legation, Dr. Rietzler, on 12th April, 1918, asked me to supper. There were three of us—he, his wife, a daughter of Max Liebermann, and myself. I had already been in Rietzler's house with Legien and other friends, and had met Bethmann-Hollweg there. Rietzler, whose acquaintance my readers have already made, considered peace with Russia a misfortune, as I did. What he said about things in Russia was not cheering. He thought the Bolsheviks would be in power for a long time. He clearly anticipated a revolutionary movement in Germany. He doubted whether in such a case we could be sure of maintaining our control—whether it would not be too big a job for us.

I replied that I did not believe in a revolution in Germany, but who could tell what would happen in a few weeks or months? Wherever we assumed control we must try to keep it. The German working man was well disciplined and organized; he knew how to control himself. One must not compare him to the Russian.

Rietzler frankly admitted that the military dictatorship was

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

predominant. He could carry through easily what the Foreign Office was now wholly incapable of, were he put into his officer's tunic and placed in command of an occupied district as a lieutenant.

When I met Rietzler a few days later in the street, he was in no cheerful mood. He was off that night to St. Petersburg and Moscow with Count Mirbach. On my asking him whether he thought it right to take such a thorough aristocrat to Russia, he said: "Mirbach is a cute fellow, and when up against Radek and his comrades it is wise to choose somebody who won't throw over everything at once, but will go on parleying and keep his head. Mirbach can do that excellently."

Soon afterwards Mirbach was murdered.

Death Sentences—An Interlude

Our friend Otto Stolten, Chief Editor of the *Hamburger Echo*, and later Assistant Mayor in Hamburg, informed me on 6th November, 1917, that four men from H.M.S. *Westphalen* had been sentenced to death in Wilhelmshaven. I immediately requested Admiral Capelle to do all in his power to prevent the carrying out of these sentences. After the War there would, of course, be a general amnesty. A death sentence, when carried out, was not to be altered, and he should think of that. On the same day I tackled the members of the Majority Party, and asked them to use their influence to the same purpose. A few days afterwards Admiral Capelle sent me word that he had expressly instructed Admiral von Scheer to grant a respite; he hoped he had been successful, though the charge, he believed, was a grave one. Scheer would be able to consider the sentence from a non-political point of view. We were very successful in other cases of death sentences. The first whose life we were able to save by intervening was

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

an Englishman, formerly a tram conductor in London. He had been taken prisoner, and badly treated, according to the report, by a German N.C.O. He was so exasperated that he struck him—which I thoroughly understand. For that he was sentenced to death. He was pardoned, and got home to his country, I hope, all right. On 28th February, 1918, Troelstra wired from The Hague, "Two comrades, Legros and Colleaux, have been sentenced to death at Antwerp. Apply for a free pardon." Naturally, I moved heaven and earth to get them off. Colleaux was a widely known Socialist and highly respected. Telegrams like Troelstra's came pouring in within twenty-four hours from all neutral countries, a proof that the Socialist International was doing its work well.

We succeeded in saving both of them. Telegrams of thanks arrived from every country that could wire to us. Especially hearty was the telegram from the Belgian Workers' Union in Holland. Colleaux, who had been condemned to death by court-martial, called on me later in Berlin, but unfortunately did not find me at home.

Tree-Frog Annexationists

The Joint Select Committee was summoned for 22nd April, 1918, after a longer recess than usual. Fehrenbach wanted to know whether there was more solid unanimity, and if combined work on the Budget proposals was possible. Ebert fully stated what had formerly brought us together: war aims, definite social-political demands, Trades Union law and the franchise in Prussia. Müller (Meiningen), the Progressive member, who in the middle of a new offensive in the West that promised success had published a wild book on war aims, complained that only certain extracts had been quoted that were called Jingoist. Konrad Haussmann stated that Müller's

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

attitude was not that of his Section. I criticized most harshly the members of the Reichstag majority who altered their views on war aims according as they received good or bad news from the front. A typical example was Dr. Müller (Meiningen), for whom the *Vorwärts* had invented a very neat name—"Tree-Frog Annexationist." When the news was good, this kind of politician jumped on the highest branch, and when bad news came climbed down again. Our point of view in the War Aims Resolution was consistent, and it was clear that we had no reason to depart from it. But the others who had not approved of the Peace Resolution from considerations of principle, could produce no valid reason for an alteration of their views. It was natural to protect our skins, but it was also natural for us to be ready to-morrow to make peace with our enemies if opportunity offered. How the present offensive would turn out no one could tell. But supposing the English were driven out of the Continent, and France and Italy made peace with us, the War with England and America would still go on. Did anyone think that we could recover war compensations or other war acquisitions from these two countries? The War should in no circumstances continue till definite reparations or even territories were secured. I took the view that in times like the present, in which German "victors and conquerors" thought they were "on top," it required more courage to keep one's mouth closed than to chatter, and make only the smallest concessions to Annexationists.

Fehrenbach and Erzberger spoke quite sensibly. Fehrenbach stated that he had definitely refused an invitation from Trimborn to speak at Cologne. Erzberger was sure the situation was unfortunately, not so good to us, as reported. In the Ukraine everything was topsy-turvy; the loss in U-boats would be soon considerably greater than the supply. Südekum

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

likewise pointed out the seriousness of the situation. Hertling was old and weak, Kühlmann's position was much undermined, Solf was so seriously ill that he would not be back in his office for a long time. For good or ill a new Government had to be reckoned with. The Co-operative Block was an urgent necessity. "A *modus vivendi* will be found, it is to be hoped, with regard to the taxes; otherwise the majority will go to pieces, much to the joy of their opponents." Fischbeck told us that Stresemann had written him a letter saying that the National Liberals were ready to co-operate in the majority conferences if we could show them a friendly spirit. But they only wished to co-operate in internal matters. Fischbeck thought that the National Liberals should not be offended with regard to the Electoral Reform in Prussia. Erzberger was very suspicious about Stresemann's letter. Haussmann thought they should not refuse the National Liberals point blank—they should, however, acquire no influence in any circumstances. Dr. David alluded to Stresemann's work for annexations. His telegrams about ducal coronets made it almost impossible to work with him. Müller (Meiningen) spoke very scornfully about Stresemann's friendliness. Fischbeck did not wish to lose touch with the minority of National Liberals, some of whom were very decent people. It would not be a bad thing from his Party's point of view to let the National Liberals work with them, for later, when these unpopular taxes were considered at the elections, they could get their share of the abuse. In any case, they could not then curse the Progressives, as they usually did. Dr. Waldstein mentioned that Stresemann was spreading the report of his having successfully split up the majority over the peace question. To be able to confirm this publicly would be useful, in order to draw attention to the majority's next move. Against this Erzberger suggested that

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

it should be publicly stated that the National Liberals wanted to co-operate, and had asked to do so, but that Stresemann had been point blank rejected. Ebert supported Fehrenbach. We should give the National Liberals to understand that we might perhaps be prepared to accept them if they would co-operate with us over the taxation questions according to our idea.

Negotiations were then broken off. At a later meeting the Social Democrats were to declare their policy on the taxation question, and then it could be seen how far we could work with them.

Amusing Episodes

In the middle of February, 1918, Herr von Bergen of the Foreign Office informed Südekum of a private telegram that apparently came from the Commissioner of Police in Berlin. Südekum not only explained to von Bergen the bogus telegram, but told me all about it, much to my amusement. The telegram was thus worded:

"It is confirmed from a reliable source that a complete reconciliation has taken place between Scheidemann and Haase; they now, as formerly, address each other by their Christian names; also well-informed people state that Scheidemann has said he will declare the General Strike from the floor of the Reichstag on 19th February."

The telegram clearly shows what evil influences were still at work, even in the fourth year of the War. Haase and I were never on such intimate terms as to address one another by our Christian names.

A few weeks after this episode an old acquaintance looked me up, who had been long since reported as killed in action—Hubert Dietzsch, a cavalry lieutenant, formerly an actor,

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

who after his school days in Kassel had started as a sculptor in the Town School of Art. Dietzsch was the son of a doctor in Waldeck. He met me here and there on my tours through the district. In Giessen we got to know one another well; he used to turn up occasionally when I was working there, and was regularly a guest at my house. Later we were both working at the same time in Nuremberg.

He was invalided out of the Army owing to wounds and continued bad health, and had been appointed to the War Press Department. He had to draw up the report on the Social Democratic Press over-night, for the next day he was to furnish the Chief with a long article on this subject: Is the Social Democratic Party a reforming or revolutionary Party? I laughed long and loudly over it, but Dietzsch was worried to death, for he had never troubled his head about politics. He showed me a number of papers in which were articles on Karl Marx. Was Marx a revolutionary?

We had known each other for more than twenty years, and had discussed together Gerhart Hauptmann, Sudermann, Ibsen and Strindberg, as well as Kainz, Matkowsky and many other artists, male and female; we had never got as far as Karl Marx, because Dietzsch took not the slightest interest in political questions. Now this literary fellow was suddenly commandeered for politics, just as Lauffs, an artillery captain, had been commandeered formerly by the Kaiser for poetry. Dietzsch was in despair; he could not accept my offer to write his essay next day for his Chief, because he had to appear with his work on Socialism very early next morning—at reveille. I tried to gallop the cavalry officer through the differences between Reform and Revolution. I pointed to the lamp standing on my table. "Imagine that to be an oil lamp that does not answer to our notions of what light should be. The worse it

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

burns the more we tinker at it, till the light improves. Then we put on a mantle that breaks to pieces in two or three days. We try every contraption intended to improve the lamp. We do not lose patience, but go on tinkering. The improvement in the light, through getting rid of defects and experimenting with new dodges, is the work of Reform. You improve the old without changing the system. But meanwhile electricity has come to the aid of mankind. One fine day we throw the old oil lamp against the wall or put it in the dustbin and switch on the electric light. That is a revolution in the art of illumination, for we have done away with an antiquated method by means of another that is perfectly new. Now notice, friend. The change from oil to electricity is an example of the change from Capitalism to Socialism, and in order that your Chief may understand it, as he is probably 'slower on the uptake' than you are, I will give you the lamp to experiment with, but you must bring it back to-morrow."

Dietzsch was naturally grateful for the lamp; now everything seemed plain sailing. He was sure I could put before his Chief next morning a marvellous article on Reform and Revolution. I drew his attention to the not inconsiderable differences between an oil lamp and Capitalism and between electric light and Socialism. Revolution in lamps any father of a family who has the necessary funds can bring about. Social Revolution can only be effected if the majority of a highly educated people desire it, and if the basis for it—a highly complex system of Capitalism—is given. Anyone who wants to win over the majority of the people to attain his object, like the S.P.D., is a democratic Socialist and in theory a revolutionist. Anyone who wants to replace one system by another by "assault and battery"—with hay forks and hand grenades—as has happened in Russia, travels on different lines

IN TOUCH WITH THE RUSSIANS

from us Social Democrats. We have nothing to say to forcible means.

Dietzsch would not let me say another word, as he fancied he already understood it all.

IV

THE LAST OFFENSIVE

AT the beginning of 1917, the Supreme Command was probably not quite sure of victory. Zimmermann, the Secretary of State, had assured me in an interview, already mentioned, on 17th January, 1917, that Hindenburg and Ludendorff had insisted on unrestricted U-boat warfare as a stimulus for the Army. "The morale of the troops has seriously deteriorated," so Zimmermann had told me in confidence. Ludendorff had agreed, according to Zimmermann's account, to certain rectifications of frontiers in Alsace-Lorraine—that were not to Germany's advantage. On 11th September, 1917, at a Privy Council meeting in Schloss Bellevue, it was resolved to surrender all claim to Belgium, if a speedy peace could be obtained in this way. Just three months after this Council meeting, on 11th December, the Supreme Command confidently stated that the military position had so much changed in our favour that the proposal for surrendering Belgium was no longer entertained. At the end of 1917 everything was going strong for Ludendorff. In a review of the "Origin, Execution and Collapse of the Offensive in 1918," Hans Delbrück records Ludendorff's objective at the time: "Until Belgium is ready politically and economically for an offensive and defensive alliance, it must remain under German military control!" Delbrück rightly characterizes this objective by a reference to Napoleon's words: "Antwerp is a pistol aimed at England's heart." This clearly means that Ludendorff's

THE LAST OFFENSIVE

objective could only be reached after the defeat of England and France. Ludendorff seems to have been clear on this point, for he describes the struggle in the West that the year 1918 would bring with it as the mightiest military effort that has ever been asked from any army. To be able to fight such a battle with success, Germany's forces had been for a long time insufficient. Ludendorff knew that—according to Delbrück. It is the reason why the well-known historian condemned Ludendorff's action in the most emphatic way.

In his memoirs on the great offensive, Ludendorff said that tactics were of more importance than pure strategy. "This means," says Delbrück, "that the attacker felt himself too weak to make his assault on that point of the enemy line where the chances of a strategical success were greatest, but chose a spot where it was easiest to break through. It was undoubtedly the right idea, in view of the existing fighting forces, but the principle is diametrically opposed to the fundamental purpose of the campaign, which was to destroy; the attack on a tactically favourable but less favourable strategical point only promised a more or less tactical success that was inadequate to the adopted objective. A strategic operation is wrongly planned if it does not promise a tactical success, *i.e.* in battle. When General Ludendorff thought he could not break through at points where a strategical objective was before him, and because of this directed his attack on a point that strategically led nowhere, we must acknowledge that the General was conscious of being too weak for the task he had set himself, and that the objective and the means of reaching it had not been rightly calculated one with the other."

I am quoting Delbrück because he is a recognized world-renowned authority as a war historian. I am forced to think that his criticism of Ludendorff's offensive is overwhelming.

His harsh comments are confirmed by General von Kühl's opinion—a Conservative, who was never unfavourably disposed to Ludendorff. Kühl had been interrogated by the Select Committee of Inquiry, and, with Delbrück, had been one of the official Commissioners. In his evidence he distinctly stated that the supply of war material was very limited on the German side, and the equipment had serious weak spots. Shortly before the offensive the War Office had been informed that the horses were starving—that the supply of petrol for motor vehicles was very short and that casualties could not be replaced.

The drives into No Man's Land, the partial breaks through that were not strategically important, were heralded as great victories. The Germans breathed again, the Jingoës rammed their eyeglasses further into their eyes, and whole factions seemed to be veering round.

The unsuccessful offensive is to be explained by Ludendorff's political ignorance and his unbridled ambition—if we leave General Field-Marshal von Hindenburg out of consideration. Delbrück, as well as Colonel Schwerdtfeger and probably very many officers, try to absolve the General Field-Marshal from many responsibilities; for instance, when Delbrück writes that he was totally under the spell of the General Quartermaster at Headquarters, and was even forced by him to do things that were wholly opposed to his real nature. I have previously stated in this book that the Field-Marshal must either share the blame and the credit with his chief adviser, or he can decline responsibility by divesting himself of much of the praise that has been given him so lavishly. Either—or!

Ludendorff, according to his own words, thought that there could only be victory or defeat. The demand for a peace by understanding he thought a crime. It is quite clear from

THE LAST OFFENSIVE

other remarks of Ludendorff's that he believed in the possibility of ending the War on the basis of Wilson's proposals—that is, on a basis of understanding. "A Wilsonian Peace, that was quite impossible while our military strength was unbroken, would have been a peace by understanding, and Ludendorff also says he personally had never been much opposed to a peace without annexations and compensations, that freely granted the right of self-determination to all nations." Delbrück makes this statement in reference to Ludendorff's "War and Politics." He brings out the inconsistency of Ludendorff's conduct and points to the remarks made by Colonel von Haeften, who represented the General at the Foreign Office in Berlin before the Commission of Inquiry.

"To the outside world the Supreme Command represented that highbrow policy without which it imagined the spirit of the Army could not be maintained, while totally ignoring the psychology of the masses. It shows itself not quite so obdurate to the Foreign Office, at any rate, in the suggestions made by its representative there. It can only be explained by the fact that it insisted on a victorious peace, but would not have had any strong objection if it had in the end been overruled through diplomatic channels, and if a peace by agreement had been concluded against its will and pleasure. If this was really (and one can hardly doubt it, according to General von Haeften's words) Ludendorff's view in his heart of hearts, no words of condemnation could be strong enough."

Delbrück is strongly opposed to General Ludendorff. He speaks of the dishonesty of avoiding all responsibility for what is generally desired, and of shunting it on to some other official and the Kaiser, owing to reluctance to becoming unpopular. "It has always been a very pleasant position to extol the strong patriot and criticize a weak Government. Soldiers especially

are always fond of quoting a saying, attributed to Blücher but long since condemned by the scientific historian, that the diplomat's pen destroys what the soldier's sword has gained. If said in good faith, it is merely an opinion, like any other. If said, however, contrary to one's conscientious belief, that diplomacy has done necessary and good work for the Fatherland, it is an outrage."

At the end of his criticism, Professor Delbrück gives Ludendorff a knock-out blow. He says, "The pure motives of patriotism by no manner of means inspired General Ludendorff's action in the campaign of 1918. Nay, rather unbridled ambition." Many took it very amiss when I said that General Ludendorff was merely a good-natured gambler. I shall be pleased to acknowledge the charge.

Prince Max of Baden writes in his "Recollections" about a conversation he had with Ludendorff shortly before the start of the offensive. The recklessness of the commander, who was quite ready to stake everything on one card, was obvious. The belief in his good luck was apparent in what he said. The shock came when Ludendorff replied, in answer to a question as to what would happen in case of failure, "Well, then, Germany must go to the devil!"

In the early days of the German offensive, spirits in England and France sank in the same ratio as they rose in Germany. In May, 1918, Smuts, the South African General, speaking in Glasgow, said, "It appears to me when this war comes to an end that it behooves all taking part in this struggle to get unofficially in touch with one another. British war aims have been modified. We want no compensation, no territory, no annexations." The men of the Fatherland's Party in Germany struck a different note. They not only drove English and

THE LAST OFFENSIVE

French together—from behind their writing-desks and platforms—but they also derided the supporters of a peace by agreement: a peace of humiliation—Germany before everything! One man, much misunderstood at the time, kept a clear head in these troublous days of war and—victory, a man whom we have often mentioned: Colonel von Haeften. He went off to Headquarters and handed to Ludendorff a memorandum stating that we should not be guided by what had happened. “Without instituting a definite course of policy working according to plan, before the conclusion of hostilities, the practical peace, that alone can satisfy our interests, cannot be guaranteed.”

To the surprise of his political representative, Ludendorff, instead of kicking him out, listened to him intently. He was convinced, it was said, of the necessity of a political offensive by the Government, because victories alone could not make peace. It was high time that something should be done, he is supposed to have said to Haeften. It was then about the middle of June, when the offensive had come to a standstill. On 17th June Haeften reported this to the Chancellor in Kühlmann’s presence. Kühlmann believed at the time in the possibility of parleying with the enemy. A week later in the Reichstag he made the sensible speech that finished his career. He made use of Haeften’s information, saying: “Without an interchange of ideas between the enemy Powers, a final conclusion can scarcely be expected through military decisions alone, without any diplomatic negotiations, in view of the enormous magnitude of this war of coalitions.”

Westarp and Stresemann, who again were sitting on the topmost rung of the frog’s ladder and dreaming of Belgium, Longwy-Briey and Calais, fell heavily upon Kühlmann. Ludendorff, again inflamed by these nationalistic tirades, delib-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

erately kicked Kühlmann overboard. "Either he goes or I go" said Ludendorff.

Kühlmann's successor was Admiral von Hintze. The position at the front was growing every day more critical and the nationalistic "tree-frogs" gradually came down off their perch. On 8th August the Army suffered a very serious defeat near Albert. The fault was naturally not attributed to the army leaders, but to the soldiers, who had been up to now proclaimed as heroes—and rightly so. On 12th August, 1918, Ludendorff said to Colonel von Haeften, who had arrived at Headquarters, "There is no more hope for the offensive; the Generals have lost their foothold." Replying to Haeften's question whether the front could be held till the offensive died down in the autumn, Ludendorff said that he had hopes of holding it. Haeften then said to the General that the Government should have its eyes opened, and would want freedom of action. "A plain official statement is needed about Belgium—restoration of her sovereign rights and integrity." Ludendorff quite agreed.

Let us recollect Ludendorff's answer to Prince Max's question, What will happen if the offensive fails? "Germany must then go to the devil!"

V

PRINCE MAX APPEARS

ALL this time, Prince Max of Baden, long supported for the Chancellorship by various Professors and Parliamentarians, and long prepared to become the leader of the Empire, had been playing at politics, with some very willing associates, for his own hand, and certainly with the best intentions. He was in correspondence now with the Supreme Command, now with the Kaiser, now with the former Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria or Colonel von Haeften. He was always hand in glove with a certain Herr Kurt Hahn. What Ludendorff was to Hindenburg Kurt Hahn was to Prince Max, both during and after his Chancellorship, though unseen and unnoticed by the outside world. We shall come back to this. On 9th September, 1918, Hahn arrived at St. Blasien, where the Prince was staying. He came straight from Colonel von Haeften: "The threatening catastrophe would come with a rush if we stood still and did nothing." What did Herr Hahn do? He wrote the ninety-ninth of his memoranda in the name of Prince Max.

Here are some extracts:

"III. I. (a) THE *Vorwärts* demands a new Peace offer.

"(b) Erzberger and Scheidemann are working on a new peace resolution which means capitulating to Wilson's theories and twaddle. . . . The whole thing will seem like a repentant appeal to our enemies abroad.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

“(c) Erzberger and Scheidemann intended drawing up a general protest against the Supreme Command and the Government; with silent acquiescence on the part of National Liberals and the Centre, they are demanding Parliamentary Government, for the undignified reason that this would contribute towards softening the hard hearts of our enemies. They are in hopes of passing their motion by demonstrating that the powers hitherto governing the Empire—Kaiser, Government and the Army Command—have proved themselves incapable of controlling Germany’s destiny.

“(d) The Extremists in the S.D. Press likewise insist on Parliamentary Government, to entice over the National Liberals, should Theodore Wolff intend to secure a seat in this Government for Stresemann.

“(e) . . . There is no relying on the National Liberals.

“The present Government cannot bring about a change for the better.”

Other parts of the memorandum read thus:

“At this period of interregnum the Crown has once again an opportunity for action without being forced from below. It can on its own initiative summon a Government which can paralyze the Reichstag majority and tear from its hands its principal weapon, by coming forward as the dominant factor, that the German people is yearning for in its hour of trial. . . .

“Either we must leave it to Messrs. Erzberger and Scheidemann to come forward at the end of the month and be accepted as our mentors to a peace by understanding, or the Crown appoints these mentors from men, whose prestige at home and abroad allows them not to mention the word Peace

PRINCE MAX APPEALS

at present, and yet enables them to strengthen visibly the Peace atmosphere in enemy countries. The choice cannot be in doubt."

As for Prince Max's remarks about me, I can state that I have never given, and never would give, undignified reasons for any demand. My whole political life, and this book as well, is a conclusive proof that Prince Max's memorandum is untrue. When in the book for which Prince Max is responsible a special reference is made to undignified behaviour, then the contradiction between the Prince's letter (12th January 1918), to his cousin, Prince von Hohenlohe, and the Note to Wilson would be a thoroughly appropriate object lesson.

An apology from the Prince that Herr Hahn might well have spared him may here be quoted:

"Konrad Haussmann, shortly before his death, gave me his notes of this meeting to peruse [the sittings of the Joint Select Committee are meant], and I must frankly confess I did the majority members of the Reichstag a bitter wrong when I warned the Kaiser of them at the beginning of September, in these words: They would exploit our grievous plight by making peace resolutions and satisfying their claims on Parliamentary authority. Anyone looking at Haussmann's comments would form the opinion that honourable members did see the reality of the situation, the necessity for a change in the Government and the duty of placing the needs of the Army before the interests of Party and individuals."

In Prince Max's "Recollections"¹ Konrad Haussmann is alluded to in a way that may give outsiders the impression that Haussmann was the moving spirit in his Section. Such was not the case. Haussmann, one of the first who wished to run Prince Max for the Chancellorship, was a distinguished

¹ "Erinnerungen und Dokumente" (Stuttgart, 1927).

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

and most intelligent man, who was universally popular; he was one of the few whom no one would like to be without in Parliament. All who knew him well were agreed on that. He was an artist, a poet, if I am a judge, who revelled in a joke and a piece of good writing. He was a political leader-writer of high distinction. This does not belittle Haussmann, with whom I was intimate for many years, nor is it meant to; it is merely to correct the Prince's appreciation of him in his book. Prince Max was greatly upset when no one proposed Haussmann when he formed his Parliamentary Government. More than a week later, after long haggling and wrangling, the Prince was able with the assent of the Majority Parties, to summon his friend to his Cabinet.

The utterly erroneous opinions expressed on many people in this much-quoted book, as well as the stretching of points and the doctrine of "ethical Imperialism," are considerable blemishes. The value of the book rests on the many official records, which often produce an astonishing effect. It may be said in the Prince's defence that he did not want to harm a living soul. He and his advisers were deficient in a knowledge of human nature that was indispensable in these critical times; he relied too much on his youthful confidant Hahn, who himself was lacking in political experience. Experience in politics is a *sine qua non*; it must be lived through, but cannot be learnt like a modern language. Anyone who has lived as intensively as I have during these times gets a true impression of the Prince's advisers through reading his much-quoted book: how they whisper names to him; how they criticize unfavourably a man who perhaps has not let them down gently with their well-meant advice, and give good marks to others who have obviously indulged in fantastic suggestions.

PRINCE MAX APPEALS

On the Eve of the Collapse

The German people and its representatives were continuously fooled about conditions at the front, while the lines in the West were cracking at all points. Anyone who had followed the course of the War with his eyes open could have had no doubt of our final collapse, unless a miracle happened. The days of miracles, however, were over, unless we considered the brand-new American aeroplanes and tanks as such. Then we had, unfortunately, to admit that all these miracles happened in favour of the other side, and against us.

The more the Prussian Junkers and their adherents were affected by gloomy forebodings, the more inclined they seemed to approach the lower classes. In the Prussian Diet they got so far as to approve of plural voting, which gave favoured electors as many as six votes. This six-vote franchise was to be improved upon the harder the times (May, 1918) became, but finally a motion by the National Liberals, Lohmann and Fuhrmann, was carried, limiting the votes to three.

Hard times inspired many politicians with very odd ideas. In July, 1918, Friedrich Naumann looked me up—unmistakably at the request of some big-wig. The Social Democrats were speculating who would be the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. To my exclamation of astonishment he replied at length: "Ludendorff and Kühlmann could not get on together. Kühlmann would therefore go. Ludendorff wanted to get a man into the Foreign Office whom he could work with without continual friction."

"He wants a young man—a coolie."

Naumann: "I won't say that exactly, but you are quite right: he wants a man to take Kühlmann's place with whom he can work, and he wants him to be a confidant of yours."

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

"I really don't understand how you can repeat a proposal like that. The young man who is to carry out Ludendorff's wishes is to be a confidant of ours. Ludendorff's young man would surely be the rope by which we should tie up our own Party. It's a drunken idea."

Naumann then tried to get me to talk to Ludendorff seriously. "Go off to Headquarters. What is not finished in one day must be discussed for many. You must talk to Ludendorff."

The good Naumann went away very dissatisfied with me.

The Government muddled along; the Reichstag and the politicians muddled along; everybody seemed to think that if they could win time they would gain much. In the Joint Select Committee speeches followed speeches. A clear solid majority which, as everyone knew, was an absolute necessity, could scarcely be kept together, because all Parties were paying too much attention to the demands and wishes of their constituents. In the War the evil consequences of Party dissensions were more in evidence than usual in Germany, where every bar parlor would have dearly liked to put up its own candidate. It was perfectly sickening how they tinkered round with a declaration, subscribing to the League of Nations—and supplementary to the Peace Resolution of 19th July. One had misgivings of a tactical kind, others made legal quibbles, especially Groeber, who did not altogether believe in the power given to a league of nations. After much toil all that was produced was a miserable compromise!

A memorandum was to be sent into the Government. Good heavens! What? Another memorandum! Instead of hammering with their fists on the table and deciding that such

PRINCE MAX APPEALS

and such must be done, the majority of the Reichstag, which threatened every fortnight, and then every two days, to disappear, negotiated, stormed and compromised! And sheets of paper covered with carefully-thought-out suggestions and recommendations. We Social Democrats had made definite minimum demands in the Section, and published them so as to bind other Parties to some extent to the memorandum. Great was the hubbub in consequence! In the midst of all this confusion the sittings of the Head Select Committee took place, at which there were piteous complaints about our dire condition. Austria, as everybody knew, was done for; Bulgaria was beginning a peace movement on her own. What did Turkey mean to do? Despite all this, Kühlmann's successor at the Foreign Office, Admiral von Hintze, tried to rouse hopes by declaring that Bulgaria's peace move was begun without the consent of the King and Parliament. German and Austrian troops were already in Bulgaria to stop the army that was retreating quickly (26th and 27th September).

Could any honourable member be in the dark about the meaning of this despairing situation? Erzberger reported some remarks by the Austrian Premier Hussarek about Turkey at once following Bulgaria's example; Austria was, of course, finished with. Now let us read how these negotiations were reported in Prince Max's book:

"Scheidemann said the optimism of the Secretary of State was unintelligible, and entreated him for God's sake not to deceive himself about the situation. In a week Workers' and Soldiers' Councils might be sitting in this hall. It is the only nervy statement made in course of these proceedings."

If such had been written on the same day, or even the day after the meeting one might say that the explanatory introduc-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

tion of the writer is clearly a little too long. That such an opinion could appear in print more than eight years after that meeting is incomprehensible. The hopes that Hintze wanted to arouse I said were not understandable. Admiral von Hintze the day after had to acknowledge that I was right. Prince Max the next day stated that all hope of a happy issue in Bulgaria was abandoned. On the day following my display of nerves Hindenburg and Ludendorff sat together considering in despair how they should get out of the mess.

A few days after my speech I was sitting, much against my will, in the Cabinet of Prince Max—even I—Scheidemann, the wild denouncer of the Hohenzollerns, whom the political scribes of the *Kreuzzeitung* wanted to shoot against the wall—had been appointed and confirmed by Emperor William II. as Secretary of State! Five weeks later Workers' and Soldiers' Councils were held in Kiel, Hamburg, Munich and Berlin. Many years later Admiral von Hintze told me that my ejaculation at the meeting above described had made the deepest impression upon him.

VI

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

NOW blows hailed fast and furious on those who had been so grievously deceived, especially in Berlin.

When Prince Max entered the capital of the Empire as Chancellor *designatus* on 1st October, Colonel von Haeften gave him something like a cold douche. "The military situation has got worse. In Spa the step has been taken of informing President Wilson through the Imperial Government that his fourteen points are accepted; he was at liberty to bring about an armistice as quickly as possible and begin negotiations." The Prince trembled with horror and would sooner have retired at once. "My whole policy was based on our being able to hold out. I had no notion how frightful our position was, and all the world as well; it would now learn of it by our offer." The two gentlemen drove off to the Vice-Chancellor von Payer, who immediately summoned Major v. d. Bussche, who had hurried back from Headquarters. Previous to the secret meeting of the chairman of the Section Bussche reported as follows to Prince Max:

"In a few days the situation has materially altered. The collapse of the Bulgarian Front has upset all our arrangements. Troops intended for the Western Front must be sent out there. At the same time strong attacks are developing on the Western Front. We could have resisted these, but must assume that these attacks will continue. Two factors are responsible for the change for the worse in our position: first, the tanks; secondly, the question of reserves. The massed attacks by

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

tanks have played havoc with the soldiers' nerves. To supply our losses is no longer possible; in twenty-four hours the position may get worse."

V. d. Bussche then informed Prince Max of a telephone message he had received from Main Headquarters a few hours previously:

"Main Headquarters,

"1st October, 1918,

"1.30 p.m.

"If up to seven to eight o'clock this evening reliable information is to hand that Prince Max of Baden is forming a Government, I agree to a postponement till to-morrow forenoon. On the other hand, if the formation of a Government is in doubt, I consider the issue of a declaration to all foreign governments to-night imperative.

"VON HINDENBERG."

The Prince was ruffled, for he had certainly not imagined the beginning of his Chancellorship would be like this.

The Army Cannot Wait Forty-eight Hours

Freiherr von Hertling, who still acted as Chancellor up to the dissolution of Parliament, was naturally not inactive after hearing of the demand for an armistice by the Supreme Command. He requested his representative at Main Headquarters, Freiherr von Lersner, to have a serious talk with Ludendorff and report to him at once. Lersner's answer was a staggerer, like all the news from Headquarters in these days:

"Main Headquarters,

"1st October, 1918.

"General Ludendorff informed me that our offer must be sent on to Washington from Berne forthwith. The Army

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

could not wait forty-eight hours. He urgently requested Your Excellency to do all you can to get the offer through in the speediest way possible.

"I told him plainly that the enemy could hardly send a reply within a week, in spite of all the speeding up. The General stated that all depended on the offer being in the hands of the Entente at latest on Wednesday or Thursday morning, and begs Your Excellency to put everything in motion for that purpose. To speed up things, he believed the Note could be transmitted by wireless from Nauen to the addressee in the Swiss Code.

"(Signed) LERSNER."

As the error of ignoring the influence of the Supreme Command or belittling the same in political matters has repeatedly been made in the past, it must be clearly borne in mind that Prince Max, according to his own account, inquired first of the Supreme Command whether they were agreed to his appointment as Chancellor. Even Herr von Payer, one of the sturdiest Democrats in the Kaiser's time, had nothing to find fault with here. Payer asked Haeften to telephone to Main Headquarters and get the consent of the Supreme Command to Prince Max's appointment. Even in the present crisis, when Hindenburg and Ludendorff were at their wits' end and were asking the Chancellor to help them, these were first consulted as to whether the prospective Chancellor was acceptable. Hindenburg and Ludendorff approved of the appointment.

Meanwhile discussions continued between Prince Max, Herr von Payer, Ebert and myself. Unless the Social Democrats joined his Cabinet the former would not accept office. He implored us to help him. He declared his agreement with

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

the terms made by the Section and the programme of the Joint Select Committee. The misgivings he mentioned to us were really immaterial. The Section's six conditions were as follows:

1. Absolute endorsement of the resolution of the Reichstag dated 19th July, 1917: to be prepared to join a league of nations, based on the principle of peaceable negotiations in all questions of dispute and of universal disarmament.

2. A perfectly frank statement on the Belgian question, the rehabilitation of Belgium, an understanding on reparations and the re-establishment of Serbia and Montenegro.

3. The conclusion of peace at Brest-Litowsk and Bucharest to be no obstacle to a General Peace. The immediate establishment of civil Government in all occupied territory and of democratic representation.

4. The autonomy of Alsace-Lorraine. A universal, equal, secret and direct franchise in all German Federal States. The dissolution of the Prussian Diet, unless the same electoral rights are granted by the House of Peers Committee without delay.

5. Immediate annulment of all regulations limiting the right of assembly and the freedom of the Press. The Censorship may only be made use of for purely military matters, questions of military tactics and strategy, movement of troops, replenishment of war material, the establishment of a political body of control for all the measures connected with the "state of siege," and the abolition of all military associations with political objects.

6. Uniformity of Imperial policy, shelving of irresponsible governing bodies, the appointment of Government representatives from the Majority Party in Parliament, or of persons

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

supporting the policy of that majority. Repeal of Article 9 of the Constitution, the communication of political proclamations of the Crown and military authorities to the Imperial Chancellor before publication.

Article 9 laid down that a member of the Reichstag could not be at the same time a member of the Federal Council, and that any member who was appointed to a post in the State or Empire must resign his seat, though with the right of recontesting the same. The repeal of this Article had to be demanded, because otherwise directly a member entered the Government or any office of State he had to resign from the Reichstag. This was incompatible with the Parliamentary system. What member would have been willing to resign his seat to be able to enter a Cabinet for perhaps only a few days? Ebert was in favour of joining the Government; I was against it. The question of members of the Party joining the Government came up before the Section for decision on 3rd October, 1918, after having been discussed "on principle" without a division. Against the motion I had as my supporters Landsberg, Stampfer, etc.; for the motion were David, Noske and Südekum. Ebert on 2nd October was neutral. He and I, as already mentioned, had talked things over with Prince Max and Payer on many occasions. As the Prince says in his book, he discussed matters alone with Ebert. I knew nothing about it. Before the meeting of the Section on 3rd October there was a sitting of the Executive, at which I again strongly opposed joining the Government. Ebert, who during my speech came in from a meeting at which v. d. Bussche gave his report from the front (I could not go, as I had fixed an Executive meeting for the same time), was terribly upset, and spoke for the motion. On stating my view

that no one could be expected at a moment of absolutely certain collapse to enter a bankrupt concern at the head of which was a Prince, Ebert argued as follows: He really did not know whether we could save anything, but we should consider this point. Should everything, inside and out, fall to pieces, should not we be reproached for having at such a time refused our help, when we were being besought on all sides to give it? The Executive unfortunately decided on participation; the Section supported the motion, and unanimously chose Bauer and myself to join the Government. Bauer was to become Minister of Labour, while I, without portfolio, was to enter the private War Cabinet.

The Prince relates many times in his book the efforts he made to get Ebert into the Cabinet. I am very sorry that these efforts, of which I knew nothing at the time, were unsuccessful. I repent to this day that I acquiesced in the motion of the Section, and did not insist on Ebert being chosen. That he, who was on principle in favour of entering the Government, would have been ready to join it personally, he positively stated later to common friends, especially to Otto Braun. On 4th October the first Parliamentary Government went into action. It looked quite different from what Prince Max had desired. He had got hold of the following gentlemen: Dernburg, Ebert, Gothein, Harnack, Haussmann, Prince Hohenlohe, Junck, Naumann, von Payer, Rechenberg, Schwander, Solf (or Brockdorff-Rantzau). He wanted to get into the Imperial Chancery Rosenberg, Simons and Kardorff. I will not say anything about the Prince's ideal list. One can form a rough notion of how such a Government worked.

The Government was actually formed according to the proposals of the Parties concerned, as follows: 1. Imperial

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

Chancellor, Max, Prince of Baden. 2. Secretary of State of the Ministry of Labour, Bauer. 3, 4 and 5. Secretaries of State without Portfolios, Erzberger, Groeber and Scheidemann. 6. Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Solf. 7. Secretary of State for the Home Department, Trimborn. As experts, only to be summoned on special occasions to the meetings of the special War Cabinet and transferred from the former Ministries: Dr. von Krause (Justice), Ritter von Mann (Navy), Count von Roedern (Exchequer), Rücklin (Post Office), Freiherr von Stein (Agriculture), von Waldow (Food). After a ten-day struggle the Prince succeeded in getting his personal friend, Haussmann, into the Cabinet. A document worded as follows was given me:

"I hereby authorize you to undertake the duties of a Secretary of State in accordance with the wish of the Imperial Chancellor.

"WILHELM I.R.

"MAX, PRINCE OF BADEN

"Main Headquarters,

"4th October, 1918.

"To the Vice-President

of the Reichstag Scheidemann."

The formal patent came to hand at the eleventh hour, dated 31st October, 1918. It began in the pompous style of the good old days with the words:

"We, Wilhelm, by the grace of God, German Emperor, King of Prussia, etc., declare and decree it to be hereby known that We, in the name of Empire, have been most graciously pleased to appoint Philip Scheidemann, Vice-President of the Reichstag, to be a Secretary of State. . . ."

The signatures were the same as on the first document.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

The Chancellor and His Cabinet

On 5th October, about an hour before the Reichstag met, Herr von Payer read out to the Secretaries of State, Erzberger, Groeber and myself, the speech Prince Max was to make to the Reichstag. Such a course was intolerable. It was quite natural that the Chancellor's first speech should be put down to the Government account. I should therefore be made answerable for a speech the contents of which I had nothing to do with. Erzberger and I had a notion how the speech was produced, yet I only got to know the facts through Prince Max's book:

"I only managed late in the afternoon to see the gentlemen who were busy concocting the speech. I found them cheerful, and their work was progressing. Simons had drawn up his fourteen points. In every word one was conscious of the suppressed keenness with which he was ready to place Germany's case before the world. While at work he said to Hahn: 'I don't at all know if the Prince wants me as a collaborator. Do you know what principle I follow in foreign politics? Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added upon you.' And Hahn could reply, 'For ethical Imperialism the Prince has adopted the same text.'"

Anyone with any knowledge of the men and conditions at the time was quite clear according to what Imperialistic, dynastic and Biblical standard Prince Max would have preferred to construct his Government. Outside the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor and the Foreign Secretary, only Groeber, Erzberger and I belonged to the inner War Cabinet. With whom had the Prince-Chancellor discussed his speech, that Simons and Hahn had composed for him?

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

He divulged this in his book: "It was 11 P.M. before the draft of the speech was finished. I had got together in my hotel room Haeften, Solf, Warburg, Simons, Haussmann and Hahn—all of them opposed to the armistice offer." Only one member of the Cabinet was present—Solf. Let us hear what the Chancellor has still got to say: "When I had finished reading it, I was conscious, from the looks and remarks of the listeners, that they were feeling as I was: the feeling of national humiliation was passing off. We were preparing to fight for our rights—what I intended my speech to do. Solf and Haeften went over to Herr von Payer to read and support the speech in a group of Secretaries of State. I thought this a mere act of politeness."

Apart from the utterly impossible gentleman, Michaelis, this Baden Prince was certainly the most remarkable of all German Chancellors. This is perfectly clear to anyone knowing the facts in those days. Max was good Konrad Haussmann's pet candidate; the latter, along with the ethical Imperialist Hahn, was the Prince's confidant; next came Simons, the distinguished jurist and patriot—an ideal fellow in every way—all of them incomparably good and highly educated men, but practical politicians they were not. By assuming that the reading of the speech written by Hahn and Simons to the crowd of Secretaries round von Payer was a mere act of politeness, the Prince and his advisers had made a tremendous mistake. But let us hear the Prince:

"About midnight Haeften entered my room. He was as white as a sheet; I thought he was bringing bad news from the front. He said that the Secretaries and the invited members of the Foreign Office, including the referee for America, were agreed that our position did not warrant a speech such as I intended to make. The gentlemen did not doubt its

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

good effect at home, but its results abroad would be devastating. We wanted an armistice, but the Foreign Office thought only the general acceptance of the fourteen points possible. I interrupted Haeften by asking: 'What does Solf say about it?'

"His Excellency von Solf supported the Foreign Office view, and I had to propose, in the name of the Supreme Command, that the speech should not be delivered."

If the Prince had only consulted for five minutes one of the Parliamentary Secretaries, as was his obvious duty as a Parliamentary Chancellor, instead of stimulating his patriotic fervour with Messrs. Hahn, Simons and Haussmann, this experience of his would have been avoided. Readers must not lose sight of the strange way in which Solf and Haeften behaved in the incident. In the presence of the ethical Imperialists the feeling of national humiliation had disappeared after the reading of the speech they approved of. They went, with swollen heads, over to the Secretaries, and after being advised of the utter impossibility of the speech, came to grief immediately, and had to accept the objections of the Foreign Office and the Supreme Command. Prince Max had been most brilliantly advised! He could have recovered from the shock only if he had got the Government he wanted. I will frankly say what I think of the Prince. He was certainly one of the cleverest of the German princes, but that is not saying very much. He had certainly read much on politics, and had occasionally met many people who thought themselves politicians and a few who were really so. Flatterers, who are always to be found among influential men—there was no lack of such in the Wilhelmstrasse after 9th November, 1918—persuaded him that he was a great politician, and ultimately he perhaps believed it. In the whole of my political

life I never knew a man who was so completely dependent as Prince Max as Chancellor. Anyone who went through those times in the Wilhelmstrasse will be reminded by hundreds of passages in the Prince's book that without Kurt Hahn he was completely helpless. I remember the following episode: At a Cabinet meeting the Prince suddenly asked me personally a question which he apparently read from a printed notice. My reply was clearly quite different from what he expected. There was a painful pause. The Chancellor left the chair to von Payer and went out of the room. Erzberger scoffingly said across the table, "He's asking Hahn about it." Even Haussmann whispered to me that they could not get on with the "young man." After a time the Prince came back, put a supplementary question to me, and gave me an answer which, for a certainty, he had been away to obtain. In a private talk, at which, besides Groeber, Erzberger, Haussmann and I, one of the Secretaries of the Kaiser's time was present, we discussed how the Prince could be kept away from the "young man." I distinctly remember Haussmann saying we should have considerable trouble in getting Hahn out of the Chancellor's palace. From casual conversations I got the impression that he was a good, sensible man, but no politician.

On 5th October, in the Reichstag, the Prince's speech went off without a hitch—that must be said straight away. But it had been materially altered. The clever Under-Secretary constructed a new speech from scraps of the draft made by the Prince's friends. The Prince described the speech itself thus: "Every word was avoided that might anger Wilson and give him an excuse for rejecting our proposals. There was little more about foreign politics in the speech than the announcement of a peace movement. It succeeded in drawing

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

the line: readiness for a just peace; if the enemy refuses us that, then a determination to fight on."

Ludendorff's Despair

In order to get a better perspective we will sum up previous facts.

On 29th September Major v. d. Bussche was sent from Headquarters to Berlin to report to the Government that the position at the front had materially deteriorated. The breakdown on the Bulgarian front had upset all our plans. . . .

On 1st October, at 2 P.M., a telegram was sent to Major v. d. Bussche as follows: "If by 8 P.M. the new Government is formed the Supreme Command agrees to a delay till tomorrow; if not, it will not."

On 1st October, Freiherr von Lersner telegraphed from Main Headquarters to the Chancellor: "The Army cannot wait forty-eight hours."

Prince Max protested against the policy forced upon him, as well as against taking over the Chancellorship in these circumstances. He let himself be persuaded to become Chancellor; his Government was formed.

His speech was composed under very extraordinary conditions, was rejected by the Cabinet, the Supreme Command and the Foreign Office, altered by Dr. Lewald and delivered in the Reichstag on 5th October.

The despair of the Army Command was unmistakably great. Their plaintive cries to Wilson did not go fast enough across the seas. Major v. d. Bussche pressed harder than ever. He said to Colonel von Haeften, "If these civilians hesitate any longer, we shall have to take them by the scruff of the neck." On the night of 29th to 30th September the Foreign Office informed our Allies in Vienna and Constan-

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

tinople of the demands for an armistice and peace by the Supreme Command. Bulgaria, who had begged for peace on her own on 26th September, signed the agreement three days later. It was, in sooth, a devilish situation. The scales fell from Prince Max's eyes. "The whole world will know to-morrow—and of course our soldiers—how we stand. It means that Ludendorff's horrid shrieks for help will most certainly end in our Army, with its millions of men, throwing away their arms and in the enemy swarming in, yelling for our blood." The Chancellor wanted to gain time before all things. He had hopes of Ludendorff coming to his senses, and then of his feeling sorry for having howled for mercy from his enemies in this abject way. Prince Max sent Kurt Hahn to Colonel von Haeften to point out to him the state of things in England; England intended to make peace this year in any case. Von Haeften snubbed him badly, saying, "You don't know anything of the military situation." Throughout the night Haeften and Ludendorff were talking for hours over the telephone. It appeared that Ludendorff was foolish enough to think that the enemy would grant him the breathing space he wanted, and then he hoped to be able to fight on again and stem the tide. This must be added to clarify the situation.

On 2nd October Prince Max received Stresemann and Fischbeck. Streseman was very disappointed, they said, on hearing that the Prince had no use for him in the Government, but only in the Opposition. The Prince, in his distress, had summoned to his aid the Hamburg banker Warburg, who advised him not to accept the Chancellorship, as he would be powerless in existing circumstances. "If the Supreme Command regard the position so despairingly they should go across with the white flag." (Hear, hear!) That was my

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

point of view when Ebert got the better of me at the Section meeting. The appeals that he attributed to others Ludendorff must have made himself. If he had been confronted with this challenge, he would have had either to take it up and then hold his tongue for ever, or he could have declined it and gone off on his Swedish trip a few days earlier.

Yet this despairing situation was not without its humour. Count Westarp wrote in the *Kreuzzeitung* that it was quite wrong for the Conservatives (later the German Nationalists) to drop their claims on Belgium and war reparations.

The telephone bell was ringing day and night between Berlin and the Supreme Command, couriers were coming and going, and on 2nd October Hindenburg in person arrived in Berlin. All the Prince's formal entreaties were futile. The seriousness of the situation brooked no delay. The Prince took Hindenburg aside, and talked to him privately in melting accents. What was the reply? "Within a week I am expecting a fresh attack, but I cannot give you any assurance of it not ending in disaster." The Prince's impression was that Hindenburg kept a cooler head than Ludendorff, after all. Colonel von Haeften also considered the position most critical. He had an interview with von Hertling, the Chancellor, who was still in office. The Colonel said to Hertling: "What will happen if Wilson requires the Kaiser to abdicate?" Hertling replied, "The Kaiser asked me that last Sunday, and I answered: 'I don't think, Your Majesty, he will do that; but if the demand is made, we shall just go on fighting again.'" Colonel Haeften then asked Hertling whether he thought any soldier would move a finger. At the Privy Council meeting it appeared that the Kaiser was in favour of the request for an armistice and peace. He said to the Prince, who protested, "You do not come here to make things harder for the Supreme

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

Command." Next day Prince Max had another talk in private with General Field-Marshal von Hindenburg. He had a number of things to discuss with him. As Hindenburg was without his Kurt Hahn—I mean his Ludendorff—he did not reply at once, but wrote the Prince a letter that was certainly concocted after a previous talk over the telephone with Ludendorff.

"Berlin,

"3rd October, 1918.

"The Supreme Command adheres to its demand made on Sunday, 29th September, for the immediate despatch of the peace offer to our enemies.

"Owing to the breakdown on the Macedonian front, whereby a weakening of our reserves in the West is necessitated, and in consequence of the impossibility of making good our very heavy losses in the battles of the last few days, there no longer exists any prospect, according to human calculation, of forcing peace upon our enemies.

"The enemy is regularly bringing new and fresh reserves into action. The German Army still holds fast and repulses all attacks with success. But the position gets worse every day, and may force the Supreme Command to make most serious decisions.

"In these circumstances it is imperative to stop fighting in order to spare the German people and its allies further useless sacrifices. Every day lost costs thousands of brave soldiers' lives.

"VON HINDENBURG,

"General Field-Marshal."

This letter is of the greatest historical importance, because it states the real causes for the collapse. Why did the request for peace and an armistice become necessary?

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

1. Because the Macedonian front had collapsed.
2. Because in consequence the Western Front was weakened.
3. Because the great losses suffered in recent battles could not be made good, while
4. The enemy was regularly bringing new and fresh troops into action, and
5. Because it was no longer possible, owing to these reasons, to force peace on the enemy.

The untruthfulness of the war reports had been reduced to a system, according to which the German people were lied to every day. This system had miserably broken down. The Head of the Information Department was Colonel Nicolai, and hand in glove with him was the General Quartermaster, Ludendorff. Nicolai has proved to posterity what lies his reports were. The unrestricted U-boat warfare that was to bring England to her knees within a few months was a "frost." The statement of Hergt, the Conservative leader, that the Americans could neither fly nor swim, and therefore could not come, was pure moonshine. The words of Brüninghaus, an ex-captain, and later the People's Party representative, quoted at many meetings, that America's entry into the War had made hardly any difference, were criminally foolish for an officer. German generalship had broken down and was riding for a fall. That the Army had not failed stands out plain and clear in the letter quoted: "The German Army still stands fast . . . but every day lost costs thousands of brave soldiers' lives." Many things redounding to the credit and honour of the German soldier are written in this letter, that was not intended for the public eye. There was nothing about the reported undermining of the morale of the troops by revolutionary or

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

treacherous agencies; there was nothing about the dagger-thrust that Ludendorff invented in Sweden, presumably to clear himself, where he retreated to a safe position, previously prepared, under the name of Lindström—to speak once more in the style of his war reports.

Prince Max, one can understand, was in dire difficulty. He was certainly not a Michaelis or a Hertling in the Chancellor's chair. He was the heir to the Grand Duchy of Baden. Was his conduct of Imperial policy to begin by asking Wilson, the republican American, for peace and an armistice? Alas! he had pictured things so differently. The situation had become so terrible that he had to telegraph to Wilson on the night of 3rd to 4th October.

"Berlin,

"3rd October, 1918.

"The German Government requests the President of the United States of North America to take in hand the restoration of peace, to inform all nations at war of this request, and invite them to send plenipotentiaries with a view to opening negotiations. It accepts the proposals made by the President of the United States of America as a basis for peace negotiations, in his message to Congress of 8th January, 1918, and his later declarations, especially those in the speech of 27th September.

"To avoid further bloodshed the German Government requests the immediate conclusion of an armistice on land, on sea and in the air.

"(Signed) MAX, PRINCE OF BADEN,
"Imperial Chancellor."

Next morning he says he was like a man who had been sentenced to death and had forgotten this fact in his sleep. Now he intended making good what had, in his opinion, been

ruined by the telegram he had despatched. Simons! Hahn! To the rescue! He would get a speech constructed that would defend our rights unflinchingly.

Hausmann, so the Prince says, had suffered from Payer always posing as an older and wiser friend of his. He says of me that I was too dependent on my Party friends, whom I always wanted to consult. Unlike the Prince and Hausmann, Payer and I stood firmly on our own legs. What the Prince and his friends had had to experience with his speech to the Reichstag must have brought to his mind, after the lapse of nearly nine years, the fact that he had no use for collaborators who worked independently of their own Party. It was not a question of getting half a dozen Ministers to stick to the ship, but the entire people, or at any rate the Parties represented in the Cabinet. Sometimes the Prince seemed to have glimmerings of the right idea, *i.e.* of the confidence with which Parliamentary Ministers can work if they know they have their Parties behind them.

He amusingly remarks: "Erzberger and Scheidemann had no knowledge of the countries and people they wanted to influence." Only Hahn knew them well! "But they had unlimited confidence in their sound common-sense and their general intelligence when they came forward at the right time to emphasize the defensive character of the German war, and so, sure of themselves, they entered my Cabinet. We proved our mettle in foreign politics. At our deliberations in October and November they were full of good suggestions and telling words. In the all-important question of foreign policy their instinct deceived them. They had an exaggerated fear of angering Wilson by haughty speeches and would not believe that ruling nations like the Anglo-Saxons became harsher when they meet with servility." These repeated "digs," such

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

as lack of dignity and servility, would justify retorts in strong language, but these can be reserved, as the Prince would be sufficiently punished for such breaches of good manners by reminding him of his own experiences. Later in this book we shall allude to his remarks.

Von Haeften and Solf on the night of 8th October had a regular "bang up" with Hahn owing to his impossible attitude on serious political questions. No one wanted to work with the young man. The Prince therefore gave up having Hahn close to his side, but arranged for Hahn to work under Simons. He was at least not far off.

Painful Duplicity

The new Chancellor, with all his keenness on ethical Imperialism, hugged the belief of a man who had never intended doing harm to the enemy; free from all lust of conquest and all aggressive intentions, he had only lived for peace and righteousness. Or perhaps not? My belief in him suffered a frightful shock when the *Freie Zeitung* in Berne, after the Prince had assumed the Chancellorship, published a letter which he wrote to his cousin, Prince Hohenlohe (12th January, 1918). This voluminous letter was brought to the Cabinet's notice by a telegram from the Legation in Berne, and was an answer to a letter from Prince Hohenlohe, in which he had taken exception to a speech by Prince Max at Karlsruhe. Here are some extracts from the letter:

"I have long wanted to take the enemy by the collar and heap scorn on their hypocritical righteousness over the question of War Guilt, and their democratic vapourings. . . . As I reject the Parliamentarism of the West on behalf of Germany and Baden, I must say to the Baden folk and Germany respectively that I understand their necessities, but that such

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

institutions are no remedies for them. Baden likes to be led when it feels that one has sympathy with its sorrows and sufferings. In the peace question I take the same view. I only want to show the spirit in which we approach this problem, in contrast to the Western Powers. 'How' is therefore to me a word of great value, because 'what' is so hard to define, for I naturally wish our successes to be made the fullest use of, as against the so-called Peace Resolution, which was a horrid child of fear and the dog days in Berlin; I desire as far as they are possible big reparations, in any form whatsoever, so that we may not be too poor after the War. . . ."

The *Freie Zeitung* remarks on the letter that "it defines the true character of the new German Chancellor. The letter shows what importance may be attached to the German Peace proposal." I was most painfully affected, and decided not to remain in the Cabinet if the Prince could not give a satisfactory explanation. No one could fail to see that between the Prince's letter and the speech he made in the Reichstag on 5th October there was a glaring contradiction. At the same Cabinet meeting at which I first read the letter I asked the Prince for an interview immediately the sitting was over. He was quite agreeable, and wanted to speak to me privately at first, but gladly, as he said, brought in Erzberger and Groeber as Secretaries of State, as well as Wahnschaffe, the Under-Secretary, and Director Deutelmöser. I asked him without much ado whether he was in a position to give a satisfactory explanation about the letter; if not, it would be impossible for me to remain a member of his Cabinet. The Prince acknowledged frankly the authenticity of the letter, and tried to represent it as harmless. I must not forget it was a private letter to his cousin, and as the latter had assumed a strange attitude on the war question, this had naturally so angered him as to induce

him to write in a strange way. His own point of view was the one he stated in his Reichstag speech. "But," he added, "I am prepared to retire if it is thought necessary. In no circumstances will I remain in office if the slightest doubt exists." Groeber and Erzberger, the Secretaries of State, remained silent at this interview. Wahnschaffe and Deutelmöser did their best to defend the Prince. I was not to be put off. "Think what a stir the publication of the letter will cause in enemy countries, and how gravely confidence in you will now be shaken. Please compare carefully the words of your letter with your speech, and you will not be surprised if people begin to talk again of German duplicity." The Prince then said: "I am quite prepared to take the consequences . . ." I interrupted him, saying, "Don't be hasty; think the thing over. My Section must decide whether I can remain in office."

I at once brought the incident before the Section, and afterwards before the Joint Select Committee. Groeber and Erzberger confirmed my account, but asked me, however, not to leave the Cabinet. Ebert warmly supported my action. Dove raised the question whether any improvement would result if a change in the Chancellorship should take place. His view was that the contrary would be the case. Stresemann thought it doubtful whether the Prince could remain; anyhow, he should be kept in office till the Note (request for an armistice) was signed by him. The Social Democrats would certainly have to wait till then in all circumstances. Haussmann I was most sorry for. I had known him to be the Prince's candid friend. He was very unhappy about the letter. After many meetings, and discussions in many kinds of gatherings, a message from the Ambassador, von Brockdorff-Rantzau, who had been called in to advise, decided the issue. On the strength of his previous experiences he thought a change of Chancellor

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

at this moment would be the more harmful. A statement (12th October) which I had written, signed by Bauer and me and which I had privately brought to the knowledge of the Joint Select Committee, was not to be published, as the S.D. Section passed a resolution that we should remain in the Cabinet. The letter, which did not attain its object, was as follows:

"TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR,
VON PAYER

"The undersigned beg to inform Your Excellency that it is not possible for them to belong any longer to the Cabinet if His Grand Ducal Highness Prince Max of Baden remains at its head.

"The Chancellor is so compromised by a letter which he wrote on 12th January, 1918, to his cousin Prince Hohenlohe and which is now going the round of the Entente Press, that we can expect nothing good for our people from his work for the advancement of peace and progress at home.

"Your Excellency's obedient servants

"(Signed) SCHEIDEMANN.

"BAUER."

The reader will now more clearly see why the Prince was not exactly pleased by my belonging to his Cabinet. He probably thought another Social Democrat would have acted quite differently.

The new Chancellor crisis had been narrowly avoided when we were struck by the first missile from President Wilson's sling.

Between Question and Answer

The first Note from Prince Max to Wilson had been sent off on 3rd October. The President's reply arrived in Berlin

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

on 9th October. These six days of suspense and apprehension were some of the worst I have ever lived through. The first results of the Prince's begging telegram, wrung from him by Ludendorff, were such as had been anticipated. Everyone saw that Germany's collapse was a *fait accompli*. The Entente Press yelled with joy, "The criminals stretch out to us in entreaty their hands dripping with blood." German soldiers thought that now every shot was a silly waste of good stuff, and every casualty a crime. "Why should we, devoured by vermin, still go on lying in the trenches in mud and blood? Why go on mutilating bodies and hanging them out shot to bits on the barbed wire? Why go on shooting? The end has come!" The Supreme Command had given up further fighting as useless; the soldiers' arms had been torn from their hands. The worst thing was that by carrying out Ludendorff's demand, which Hindenburg had signed, even the faintest prospect of a peace by agreement had entirely disappeared. The Supreme Command had, by their demands, handed Germany over to the tender mercies of the enemy.

Prince Max Acts on His Own

What would Wilson answer? What would he not inflict on Imperial Germany to humiliate her and lay her in the dust? The "Kaiser's" Germany was what worried Prince Max most of all. Germany's fate certainly lay heavy on the patriot's chest. Who can change his skin? We all saw, first of all, a nation bled white—a nation that had been flayed and tortured for more than four years. We saw an industrious and peace-loving people, who had been forced into war against their will, staggering forward towards a hopeless future. The Prince's worries gave him no rest. The President might demand the Kaiser's abdication in his reply. "I was trying to avoid it.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Through a highly esteemed neutral Ambassador I issued a warning to the American Foreign Office to the effect that Wilson should not meddle in our internal affairs, otherwise the work for peace would come to naught, the War would be continued with the nation's whole strength, the confidence in the idea of a league of nations would be shaken, as well as the trust in those who supported it. But I had little hope that Wilson would hold his hand. I did not inform my colleagues of the step I had taken. . . ."

The Imperial Chancellor had gone behind the back of his Cabinet and issued this warning, as given in his book—yes, this warning—to Wilson, and had not communicated it afterwards to his Cabinet. That was a criminal act. His conduct was similar to Michaelis's procedure, who, after an official reply to the Pope regarding his overtures for peace, sent him a private letter that was withheld from the Select Committee of Seven. The Chancellor's action was unanimously condemned in the strongest way. He has been spared censure in this case up to now only because the passage in his book has attracted less attention than it deserved. Let us make things clear. Because the Supreme Command declared it could not wait forty-eight hours, the Chancellor, in the name of the Imperial Government, requested President Wilson to bring about immediately the establishment of peace and an armistice. On the top of this begging telegram he issued a secret personal warning to Wilson: "Hands off the Kaiser, otherwise——"

Who can say whether or not Wilson was irritated against Germany by the Prince's action? Must not, or could not, the Prince's conduct be interpreted as double dealing? In Wilson's first reply it was directly asked whether the Chancellor was speaking only for those military authorities who had hith-

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

erto carried on the War. He considered a reply to this question a matter of supreme importance from every point of view. However harshly the Prince's conduct may be criticized in this case, it certainly gives the lie to the statement of the inveterate Imperialist, that the heir to the Duchy of Baden had betrayed the Emperor. In my opinion, he put the rescue of the Kaiser before the vital interests of the people in this instance. The definite desire of the Prince to save the Kaiser at all costs induced him, presumably, to get authentic information from Ludendorff himself on the military position, on which further plans could be constructed. On 8th October the Chancellor drew up a list of questions which Ludendorff, on his arrival in Berlin, had to answer. The fundamental question was whether he could bring fighting to a standstill on enemy territory. It depended on the answer whether an expected demand for evacuation should be refused or granted.

Wilson's First Reply

Before Ludendorff could answer all these questions, Wilson's reply arrived. This was on the afternoon of 9th October. It was signed by Robert Lansing, Secretary of State. Here is the Note:

"Before answering the request of the Imperial German Government, and with the view of making that answer as sincere and frank as the important interests concerned require, the President of the United States considers it necessary to assure himself of the exact meaning of the Chancellor's Note.

"Does the Chancellor mean that the Imperial German Government accepts the terms which were laid down by the President in his message to Congress on 8th January and in the following messages, and that its object in entering into nego-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

tiations would be to agree upon the practical details of their application?

"The President of the United States feels obliged to say, with regard to the proposal for an armistice, that he would not consider himself justified to propose an armistice to the Governments with whom the United States are allied against the Central Powers as long as the armies of these Powers remain on their territory. The bona-fides of all discussion would obviously depend upon the Central Powers agreeing to evacuate all their troops forthwith from all occupied territory.

"The President thinks himself justified in asking the question whether the Chancellor is only speaking on behalf of those forces of the Empire that have hitherto been fighting. He considers an answer to this question to be supremely important from every point of view.

"Accept, sir, the renewed assurance of my respect.

"ROBERT LANSING."

A few hours after the receipt and acknowledgment of this Note, Ludendorff, who arrived in Berlin on the same day, wrote his answers to the *questionnaire*. We quote only a few, as many of the questions asked remind one too much of those that are put to recruits on parade in the Imperial Army, *e.g.* the Sergeant asks, "With or without what must the soldier not cross the barrack yard?" No answer being given, he says, "You blockheads! That's as clear as thick ink; he may not cross the barrack yard with a pipe without a lid." One of Prince Max's questions was: "Must the possibility of a military collapse be considered before the spring? If the answer is 'Yes,' is this danger imminent in the next three or four weeks?" Ludendorff's answer was: "The danger of a break through is always present. The English might have broken through with

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

their first tank attack." The Prince asked further: "How long will the present critical state of things last, as far as one can see? Is the danger point passed if the enemy has to stop his mass attacks. And when will that be, as far as one can see?" Ludendorff: "Only mass attacks are dangerous." Prince Max: "Can our front be consolidated when the danger point is passed? And by what means can that be done?" Ludendorff answered: "If these attacks are stopped, the danger is over. If French, English and Americans cease their infernal shooting and leave us in peace, then we can hold on."

According to Ludendorff's figures, reserves were 70,000 short every month. Ludendorff did not think much of the *levée en masse*, and settled the matter with a decided No: "it would do more harm than good." The Prince's report is now given in his own words:

"Query: 'Can the war be continued by us alone until the spring if the present peace movement fails, in spite of one of the two remaining allies dropping out?' The answer I got was 'We want a rest; then we can consolidate. If not, no.' I asked: 'Can we hold on if we do not get a rest?' The answer was: 'If we get a rest, we can hold on.' Our position was therefore extremely critical and obscure. General Ludendorff did not contradict Colonel Heye's statement: 'It would be a risky business if the Supreme Command did not hurry up with its peace plan. Yesterday it was touch and go with a break through.'"

The Supreme Command's Nervy Condition

Though Ludendorff seemed less despairing than at the end of September and beginning of October, he did not say a word about the possibility of rejecting the demand for evacuation. The Generals von Mudra and von Gallwitz, called in to advise

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

as experts, against the wishes of Hindenburg and Ludendorff, stated that their sections of the front were quite intact (when the peace offer was made). It became clearer that the despairing demands of the Supreme Command were due to nerves. The *Post*, an independent Conservative paper, said at the time that Ludendorff, through his action, had brought misery upon the whole nation. It was clear after the despatch of the first telegram to Wilson that a stout and prolonged resistance could not be sustained. Let us recollect what Hindenburg had written to Prince Max: "The position gets more critical every day. . . . It is imperative to stop fighting; every day wasted costs thousands of brave soldiers' lives." It was damnable dishonesty to say that our position was better than it was. The guilty consciences of those laden with War Guilt later invented the "dagger thrust." The collapse was not the consequence of the Revolution; it was the other way about: without the collapse the Revolution that broke out six weeks later would probably not have occurred.

In answer to an inquiry from Ludendorff, Scheuch, the new Minister of War, stated the next day that he could gradually get together about 600,000 men. The new war victims he reckoned up thus:

Convalescents (40,000 from home, 15,000 from the front)	55,000
The remainder of the year 1900 class (trained men 54,000, untrained 196,000)	250,000
Former prisoners in Russia	5,000
Home Reserves	75,000
From the resting places	20,000
Industrial class	73,000
Passed fit (later)	5,000
Total in Prussia	483,000

He could also count on roughly 100,000 men from Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg. Ludendorff was pleased on hear-

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

ing of these totals; he was now without doubt ready to throw these hundreds of thousands into battle, which he saw to be perfectly hopeless according to his own calculations. I most strongly opposed these fresh sacrifices. I had no longer any trust in Ludendorff. In these hours of trial Count Westarp appeared on the scene again as an unconscious humorist. He came to Prince Max and General Ludendorff, on behalf of his friends, to request that Wilson's proposals for evacuation should be refused. Everybody recognized the necessity of evacuation except the German National Count. He was ready as he had been always for the last four years, to fight on in Berlin with the sword by his side.

Colonel Heye, later chief of the Reichswehr in 1926, said bluntly that the Peace move, and still more the armistice proposal, were absolutely necessary. The troops had no rest. One could not say whether they would "hold out" or not. Fresh surprises every day. . . . Prince Max, who was very much opposed to consenting to the evacuation—indeed, we all were—said that, for the Government the obvious conclusion to be drawn from the comments of the Supreme Command was to continue with the armistice proposal and to agree on principle with the demand for evacuation. Ritter von Mann, Secretary of State, again alluded to the danger that threatened German industrial centres owing to enemy guns and airmen (11th October). But he, too, acquiesced in the opinion of the Supreme Command. After mentioning his fears, he had to retract them in deference to the view of the Supreme Command. Stresemann, on behalf of the National Liberals, demanded that military experts should be consulted before any decision was come to.

Rathenau, Count Westarp and Stresemann still thought we could stop hostilities while in enemy country. That was a

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

fundamental error. General Ludendorff had no doubt of our having to withdraw to the frontier, either driven by the enemy or by an agreed evacuation.

The Prince took Ludendorff's view—rather evacuate than break off negotiations.

Second Note to Wilson

After long hemming and hawing, the second Note was sent to Wilson in these words:

"Berlin,

"12th October, 1918.

"... The German Government has accepted the conditions that President Wilson has laid down in his Note of January, 1918, and in his later communications. The object of preliminary conversations is merely to come to an understanding on the practical details of their application.

"The German Government assumes that the Powers allied to the United States support President Wilson's declarations.

"The German Government, in conjunction with the Austro-Hungarian Government, declares itself ready, by agreeing to bring about an armistice, to entertain the proposal of evacuation. It leaves it to the President to appoint a mixed Commission, whose duty it would be to arrive at the agreement necessary to evacuation.

"The present German Government, which is responsible for the peace move, has been formed, and is in perfect accord with the majority of the Reichstag. In all its actions, approved of by this majority, the Imperial Chancellor speaks in the name of the German Government and people.

"SOLF

"Secretary of the Foreign Office."

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

Nothing was spared us! On the same date on which we had to send off this humiliating and depressing Note compelled by necessity, the English steamer *Leinster* was torpedoed by a German U-boat. Many hundreds of passengers had lost their lives. What would happen now? Would Wilson continue to negotiate? Would he dismiss the Boches in scorn, with the remark that they must be destroyed, not parleyed with? The incident luckily passed off better than was anticipated. After serious quarrels in the offices of Wilhelmstrasse, U-boat warfare was cried off—an obvious thing to do after sending off the *first* Note. The German Minister in Switzerland, Herr von Romberg, had drawn attention to the fact, the day before the torpedo incident, that the U-boats might aggravate the situation.

Before Wilson's second Note reached Berlin rumours preceded it that made many tremble—the Armistice could only be granted if the Kaiser abdicated at once. Two days before the Note arrived two sons of His Majesty—Adalbert and August Wilhelm—called upon Prince Max. Adalbert asked the Prince straight: "Shall I go to Father and tell him it is necessary?" Prince Max tried to quiet the two Hohenzollerns; he hoped the Kaiser's abdication would not be necessary.

Wilson's Second Note

Wilson's second Note, written on 16th October in the forenoon, came to hand in Berlin at 5:30 P.M., and was as follows:

"The unqualified acceptance of the terms laid down by the President of the United States on 8th January, 1918, and in his subsequent despatches, by the present German Government and the great majority of the German Reichstag, justifies the President in making a frank and direct statement of his de-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

cision relative to the Notes of the German Government of 5th and 12th October, 1918.

"It must be made clear that the carrying into effect of the evacuation and the terms of the Armistice must be left to the judgment and advice of the military advisers of the Government of the United States and the Allied Governments, and the President feels bound to say that no arrangement can be accepted by the Government of the United States that does not offer a satisfactory security and guarantee for the continuance of the present military superiority of the armies of the United States and the Allies at the front. He is confident he can assume with certainty that this will be the opinion and decision of the Allied Governments.

"The President of the United States considers it his duty to add that neither the Government of the United States nor the Governments with which the United States are associated as Allies (of this he is sure) will consent to consider an armistice so long as Germany's combatant forces continue the unlawful and inhuman practices, in which they still persist. Simultaneously with the German Government's offer of peace proposals to the Government of the United States, its submarines are occupied with sinking passenger ships at sea, and not only the ships themselves, but also the boats in which passengers and crews are trying to save their lives. In their enforced retreat from Flanders and France the German armies are cutting their way through by wanton destruction, which has always been regarded as a direct violation of the rules and traditions of civilized warfare. Towns and villages, if they are not destroyed, are depleted of all they possess, often even of their inhabitants. It cannot be expected that the nations allied against Germany will assent to an armistice as long as this inhuman treatment, looting and devastation are continued,

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

which they rightly regard with horror and exasperation. It is also necessary, to avoid any possibility of a misunderstanding, for the President to draw particular attention to the words and clear intention of one of the peace conditions. It is contained in the President's message that he delivered at Mt. Vernon on 16th July. It runs as follows: 'The destruction of any tyrannical state that has it in its power to disturb alone, secretly and arbitrarily, the peace of the world, or, in case this state cannot be for the time being wiped out of existence, its reduction at least to virtual impotence.' And the Power that has decided up to now the fate of the German nation is such as has been here stated. The German people have the option of changing this. These words of the President naturally imply a condition which must be discharged before the peace, if peace is to result from the action of the German people itself. The President considers it his bounden duty to state that the establishment of peace, in his opinion, will depend on the exactitude and satisfactory character of the guarantees which can be given in this fundamental question. It is indispensable that the Powers allied against Germany should be protected against contingencies with regard to those with whom they are negotiating. The President will send a special reply to the Royal and Imperial Government of Austria-Hungary."

This Note had the effect of a bombshell. Gradually the air cleared. Wilson intended only negotiating with a duly constituted body. Clearly the fact rankled that a prince was at the head of the Government, and that this prince, as we know, sent with a petition for peace a private warning to Wilson. Yet this Note was so diplomatically worded that it could not be definitely gathered from it that for Wilson the abdication of the Kaiser was an indispensable condition for his further mediation. This view was expressed in the course of a discussion

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

at a Cabinet sitting. Wilson would probably be content to restrict monarchism in Germany to a minimum, as in England, Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden. Prince Max says in his book that I expressed the general feeling: "I personally feel it a disgrace that we should now have to institute democratic reforms under the pressure of our enemies." The reader will remember my saying much earlier to Government representatives, when demanding the progressive development of our Constitution, "Why, bless me, the Tsar would be ready to grant all that now!"

Among the military experts who were consulted during these days was General Hoffmann, whom I got to know and often met afterwards in the following years at private parties. The more I came in contact with him (he was a Hessian, too) the more I realized what a clever and honest man he was. It made no small stir, when things were lively in Berlin, that General Hoffmann appeared at a popular S.D. meeting and talked very straight during the debate. Hoffmann said at a Cabinet meeting on 17th October, 1918: "Ten divisions can be transferred from the East to the West, but these divisions are no longer effective for the offensive, I should like to repeat. They are still effective for defence, but against the 'fighting material' of the enemy they can no longer be employed."

On the Chancellor remarking that he might be responsible for the transference, Hoffmann asked for three months.

At the same meeting Solf, the Foreign Secretary, said: "I asked Herr von Mumm what would happen in the Ukraine if we took away German troops. He was quite sure of the Bolsheviks playing the very devil. All the rich men would have their heads cut off."

General Ludendorff: "We must take it into consideration, even if it is contrary to our promise and belief, when it

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

is necessary for the safety of the German Fatherland.”

Prince Max: “How many Americans land monthly in France?”

Colonel Heye: “On the average of recent months, two hundred and fifty thousand.”

General Ludendorff: “In April, May and June the average was three hundred and fifty thousand.”

Chancellor: “What will be the strength of the American Army next spring?”

Colonel Heye: “The American Army Command reckons the number of troops for next spring to be two million, three hundred thousand men.”

Chancellor: “Is there a corresponding supply of war material?”

Colonel Heye: “If the present rate is kept up, yes. The Americans have always been accurate in their estimates.”

Meanwhile Ludendorff, who had brought us into the most terrible straits, began talking very blatantly. On Prince Max asking him whether the situation was not the same as when we were forced to make a peace move with Wilson, Ludendorff replied, “I am under the impression that, before we adopt the terms of this Note—which are too cruel—we should say to the enemy: ‘Come and fight for them.’”

Chancellor: “And if he gets them, will he not make our own plight worse than before?”

Ludendorff: “It cannot be worse.”

Chancellor: “Oh, yes; they can break into Germany and lay waste the land.”

Third Note to Wilson

After the bitterest quarrels between men who were conscious of their responsibility to the country on the one side, and the

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

asthmatic braggarts on the other, the third Note to Wilson was produced.

“Berlin,

“20th October, 1918.

(Sent off 21st October).

“The German Government, on its acceptance of the proposal for evacuating the occupied territory, concludes that its *modus operandi* and the terms of the Armistice are to be left to the judgment of military advisers, and that the present strength of the fighting forces on all fronts should be made the basis of all agreements that guarantee and secure it. The German Government leaves it to the President to afford facilities for regulating details, and trusts that the President will approve of no demand that is incompatible with the honour of the German people and the inauguration of a righteous Peace.

“The German Government protests against the reproach of unlawful and inhuman action that has been made against the German fighting forces by land and sea, and at the same time against the German people.

“To cover a retreat a certain amount of damage is always inevitable, and even is internationally permitted. German troops have the strictest orders to spare private property and consider the population as far as they can. When excesses occur, however, the guilty ones are punished. The German Government denies that the German Navy in sinking ships has deliberately destroyed lifeboats with their occupants. The German Government proposes that the evidence shall be brought before neutral Commissions on all these points. To avoid everything likely to make the work of peace more difficult, orders have been given to all submarine commanders, at the instance of the German Government, which prohibit any torpedo attack of passenger ships, but, for technical rea-

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

sons, no guarantee can be given that this order reaches every U-boat at sea before her return to port.

"As a fundamental condition for peace the President prescribes the destruction of any absolute power that is able by itself, uncontrolled and for selfish reasons, to disturb the peace of the world. The German Government replies to this that hitherto the voice of the people has had no influence in the formation of the Government. The Constitution did not provide for the co-operation of the people in the question of peace and war. A fundamental change in these conditions has been introduced. The new Government has been formed in complete agreement with the wishes of the people's representatives elected by an equal, direct and secret ballot. The leaders of the principal Parties of the Reichstag are chosen from these Parties. In future no Government can accept office or legislate without possessing a majority in the Reichstag. The responsibility of the Imperial Chancellor is prescribed and secured by law. The first act of the new Government has been to lay before the Reichstag a Bill, through which the Constitution of the Empire will be altered and the consent of the people's representatives required in any decision on war and peace.

"The guarantee for the durability of the new reform not only rests on legal security, but also on the unshakable will of the German people, which by a great majority stands behind these reforms and demands their vigorous prosecution. The President's question, with whom he and the Governments allied against Germany are to negotiate is clearly and unequivocally answered by the fact that the offers of Peace and the Armistice come from a Government which, free from any arbitrary and irresponsible influence, is supported by the assent of the overwhelming majority of the German people.

"SOLF."

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

The Kaiser: Till the Last Blow Is Struck

After being forced by the resolution of the S.D. Section to enter the Government, I was not spared a second meeting with the Kaiser. On 21st October, 1918, as I drove through the Tiergarten to the Schloss Bellevue, where Prince Max was to introduce the new members of the Government, queer thoughts coursed through my brain: "To be sure, it is to-day; to be sure, to-day is 21st October. It is the day the Socialist Law came into force! Of course it is—to-day forty years ago! Wilhelm's scandalous law, constructed on lies and deceit, directed against the dangerous policy of the Social Democratic Party. And then the triumph over brute force. Bismarck beaten by the S.P.D., and sacked by the Kaiser. And all our young ruler's efforts to destroy us. 'Who opposes me, him will I destroy! Socialism is only a passing phase! *Sic volo, sic iubeo!* One only is master in this country—that is I.'" Then came into my mind what I had experienced with this mentally deficient fellow, in whose presence the entire goody-goody *élite* of society had been bowing the knee for years and years, though every man jack of them must have shaken his fist at him in secret fairly often. . . . And now I was driving to meet this man for the second time, who had brought such untold misery on his people!

What would he say when one of his own cousins, with sighs and groans, was found ready to take over the office of Chancellor under the condition that the Social Democrats would help him? Social Democrats—really and truly Social Democrats, "men not worthy to be called Germans"; Social Democrats, fellows without a country. Would he once more talk drivel, as he had done a year ago to Ebert and others, about the second Punic War which he would wage to destroy

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

England? Would he once more—— A jolt, the car stops—Bellevue!

Royal flunkeys, standing round in great numbers, helped us out of our coats. The Chancellor was already in the drawing-room. A minute later all the gentlemen invited were in their places: Groeber and Erzberger of the Centre, Haussmann of the Progressive People's Party, "fellows without a country" like Bauer, Dr. David, Dr. August Müller, Robert Schmidt and myself. We had hardly assembled when the Kaiser appeared with a writing-pad in his right hand. He took his stand a few paces from us, supporting his withered left arm, under which he held his helmet on the hilt of his sword, then bowed and said: "Gentlemen, I have just put a few lines on paper." Then he raised the flap with his right hand, and we could see some typewritten sheets stuck together on the top. With a half smile he kept fidgeting with the flap, as much as to say, "You know, to be sure, how we do these things." Then he read the manuscript in a loud voice.

"Gentlemen, I welcome you to your new appointments, to which you, as trusted servants of the public, have been called. With my decree of 30th September, by virtue of which your nominations followed, I made a definite step towards giving the German people new constitutional rights. In the terrific struggle of the Great War the task has been assigned to us of consolidating the structure of the Empire at home on new and broader foundations. The convulsions of war have shown us where the supports of the house that protects us all are weak and old-fashioned, and where they are in need of repair. Yet they have also shown us new living springs of power that urge our people forward to the light. . . . A people that has fought so heroically, that has done such superhuman deeds, must be honoured throughout all ages. This is written large

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

on my heart, and once more do I acknowledge it. In a series of proclamations I have emphasized my will and pleasure that new times require new systems. The German people is to be called upon to co-operate in working out its own salvation, on wide and progressive lines, as the equal of any country on the earth in political freedom, shunning no comparison with any other for mental intelligence and solid patriotic feeling. I trust we shall succeed, united by warm love for our country and the consciousness of heavy responsibility, in preparing for a new Germany a road to a bright and happy future. For this we will put forth all our strength, prepared to follow the path of peace, yet at the same time prepared to fight to the last gasp and the last blow if our enemies so desire."

This effusion would have made an excellent impression if it had been read long before. The concluding words about the last gasp and the last blow seemed to me to be in bad taste in the present state of things.

A truly great people. Not a word about traitors to their country! A people that has fought so heroically, that has done such superhuman deeds. Not a word about the dagger thrust! A people that has been content with the rule of a man who on this, the twenty-first day of October, seemed so small—so very, very small—who, in fact, was smaller even than that, and who had, as German Emperor, wrought such mischief throughout the world.

I was almost prostrate with remorse. At first I badly wanted to bolt from the house as quickly as I could. The Kaiser seemed quite unconcerned. His placid face was perhaps only the result of admirable training. But what effect was such a free-and-easy manner, such a happy-go-lucky expression to have on us? Did he imagine he could pose before us as a hero, imperturbable in his confidence of success?

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

The Chancellor introduced all present one by one to the Kaiser. It was obvious His Majesty had been admirably coached. He spoke to Bauer, who had moved from Breslau to Berlin, about Breslau; to Dr. David, who had lived the best part of his life in Hesse, about Hesse; he addressed Robert Schmidt as a fellow Berliner and he said to me, "We were surely at school together in Kassel."

I corrected him when he went into details. As on the first occasion in the Wilhelmstrasse, William II. made the most unfavourable impression upon me. His chattering jarred upon me.

An Amnesty for Liebknecht

Meanwhile the granting of a general amnesty was one of the duties imposed on the Cabinet. Everyone welcomed the generosity and the way it was carried out. Only two cases caused much discussion. Dittmann, a member of the Reichstag, had been sentenced to five years' fortress imprisonment, and had already done nine months. The proposal of a military representative that Dittmann should be excluded was flatly rejected. It was even stated by a fair-minded Secretary of State that Dittmann was a perfectly harmless individual. Considerable difficulties arose over Liebknecht. The military authorities would in no circumstances approve of an amnesty for Liebknecht. I protested very strongly against this, and remarked, among other things, that such would be a very bad thing from a political point of view. The general amnesty would be welcomed by all classes, but if this isolated member of the Reichstag was kept in prison, the amnesty for millions of workingmen would be of no importance. To understand that, a better knowledge of the working-man's opinion was necessary.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

The fight for Liebknecht's release went on for days; fresh evidence from soldiers and civilians was produced to show that it was out of the question. Finally I won the day, and he was released.

The Prince Speaks Again in the Reichstag

A sitting of the Reichstag took place on 22nd October, when the Chancellor made a speech about which he had not previously informed the Cabinet. Probably only Messrs. Simons and Hahn knew about it. In his memoirs the Prince says, "being made wise by experience," he did not discuss the speech with the Cabinet. It was made clear to him by the lapse of time that he would have had no luck by sticking to his practice for a few weeks longer. He was glad President Wilson knew nothing of his arbitrary action, otherwise his Notes would perhaps have been more humiliating. Less noteworthy than this speech, which talked of the people having to put their shoulders to the wheel, was the debate I had to listen to from the Government benches. The Prince remarked on Ebert's speech on behalf of the Section, that he made a special point of "showing not the slightest satisfaction with regard to the recent reforms, and was obviously out to pose as an ardent Labour leader before the crowd." The Prince, normally so keen on Ebert, is here trying to show up our comrade as a demagogue of the worst type. Finally he said that Ebert rendered himself liable to suspicion by his uncontrolled desire for national peace. Stresemann pointed out the importance of the S.P.D.'s support. "If only a Bismarck had had such a powerful Labour Party to back him!—We are, and shall always be, Monarchists." In the course of the debate Haase spoke for the Independents, Stychel for the Poles, Ricklin for the Alsace-Lorrainers, and Hansen for the Danes. What the Government had to hear was not at all

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

nice! Noske, who spoke next day for the Social Democratic Party, roused the Prince to fury. In his Memoirs he says: "In his long and contradictory speech he made fine play with the Poles and Independents, but, like Ebert, he was concerned with the spirit of the masses, and had evidently been instructed to defend his Party against the reproach of being blind followers of the Government. One remark fairly shocked the House. Noske mentioned the Conservative demand for a strong monarchy, adding the words, "That makes no difference to the feeling prevailing in the country that the wearer of the Imperial Crown has only to lift his little finger to relieve the misery of millions.'"

Wilson's Latest Reply

Wilson's answer to the Berlin Note followed within forty-eight hours. In the preliminary remarks all statements made by the Berlin Government were recapitulated in the usual diplomatic style and allusion was made to its solemn and lucid declarations, and the President said he felt he could no longer refuse to approach the Governments allied with the United States on the question of an armistice.

"But he considers it his duty to say again that the only armistice that he would feel justified in placing before them for their consideration would be such as would place the United States and the Powers associated with them in a position where they could satisfactorily enforce any agreement that might be reached, and so render impossible any resumption of hostilities by Germany.

"The President has consequently sent his correspondence with the present German authorities to the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated as a belligerent, coupling with it the proposal—in case these Gov-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

ernments are willing to make peace in accordance with the offered terms and conditions—of inviting their military advisers and those of the United States to circulate to the Governments associated against Germany the terms necessary for an armistice, which would fully guarantee the interests of the nations concerned and ensure the unrestricted right of the associated Governments in settling the details of the peace to which the German Government has declared its agreement, providing that they consider an armistice possible. The acceptance of the terms of the armistice by Germany will be the best concrete proof of its agreement to the terms and conditions of the peace, from which the whole movement originates.

“The President feels that he would not be sincere were he not to state, in the clearest possible language, why extraordinary guarantees must be required. However important and significant the changes in the Constitution may be of which the German Secretary for Foreign Affairs speaks in his Note of 20th October, it is by no means clear that the principles of a Government responsible to the German people have been now completely accepted, or that a guarantee exists, or is being considered, for the purpose of making permanent the change of system and the observance of regulations concerning which an agreement has been now partially arrived at. Moreover, it is not apparent that the root of the present difficulty has been reached. It may be that future wars will be under the control of the German people, but the present war was not, and with the present war we have to deal. It is manifest that the German people possess no means of forcing the military authorities of the Empire to surrender to the will of the people, that the authority of the King of Prussia to prescribe and direct the policy of the Empire is undiminished, and that the final decision still rests with those who have been hitherto

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

the rulers of Germany. Conscious that the peace of the world now depends on clear and sincere language and action, the President regards it as his duty, without any attempt to mince words, which may sound harsh, to state boldly that the nations of the world place, and can place, no trust in the words of those who had been up to now the controllers of German policy, and to remark once more that at the conclusion of peace, and in the attempt to make good the untold damage and injustice of this war, the United States can negotiate with none but the actual representatives of the German people, to whom a *bona-fide* constitutional position as the real rulers of Germany has been assured. If the United States must now treat with the military authorities and the monarchical autocrats of Germany, and later in all probability must continue to do so, in view of the international obligations of the German Empire, then they must demand not negotiations for peace, but surrender. Nothing can be gained by omitting these fundamental questions."

All doubts that remained were dispelled, and the last hopes of many were gone. William II.'s days as Emperor were numbered. Dr. Solf, as an expert—*i.e.* in his capacity of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—gave the following information:

"The general result is that the abdication of the Emperor is expected. It is clearly desired that an outstanding figure in German militarism should disappear."

In the Cabinet things went smoother than I expected. What was the good of making a mystery about it in present circumstances? No member of the Cabinet offered his life-blood for the Kaiser's cause. Doubts were expressed continually and on every occasion. The then Minister of War gave the weightiest reasons against the Kaiser's retirement and the Crown Prince's renunciation of the throne. Yet his arguments

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

availed but little. What were his arguments? Any steps taken in favour of the Kaiser's abdication would have serious results, especially in the Army. Generals and officers would think of the oath they had sworn—loyalty to their Emperor. If they were deprived of that they would be deprived of what chiefly made them fight on. The idea that constantly recurred, that abdication perhaps meant peace, was a fallacy.

We shall hear a great deal about how the officers, especially at Headquarters, became reconciled to the Kaiser's disappearance. The Chancellor was repeatedly requested not to publish Wilson's Note until the Kaiser had taken time by the forelock, *i.e.* abdicated before the Note was made known. Colonel von Haeften, Ludendorff's representative, had raised this point.

Long before the Kaiser crisis became acute, all classes of the people began to talk about it. Abdication was most keenly demanded by officials in Bavaria. The Prussian Minister in Munich, von Treutler, telegraphed on 25th October that both the Prime Minister, Dandl (he had advocated the necessity of the abdication on a personal visit to me), and the Bavarian War Minister were in favour of openly telling the Kaiser that he must make the sacrifice, because otherwise no acceptable peace would be granted. "Lerchenfeld has been so instructed." Lerchenfeld was Bavaria's representative on the Federal Council, and had been for years a *grata persona* at Court—his orders went as far as to work for the Kaiser's speedy retirement. In all public places, in trains and shops, in all factories and workshops, there was only one topic of conversation: Away with the Kaiser! Meanwhile the Press became more and more audacious, though the censors never failed to warn and threaten. The problem was first tackled in the S.D. newspapers. On 25th October the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which was hostile to Prince Max, quite openly requested the Kaiser's

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

abdication with the object of getting the democratic guarantees which Wilson desired and which would satisfy him. There were serious disputes between a Foreign Office representative and myself over the diplomat's neat suggestion that I should help him to keep a tighter hand on the Press in the Kaiser question! I told him and wrote him what I thought. The only subject talked of in the Cabinet was the Kaiser crisis. Some remarks that do not deserve to be forgotten are quoted here:

Von Payer "trusted both the Emperor and the Chancellor would do the right thing."

Trimborn: "I can only confirm what Scheidemann has said: the feeling against the Kaiser has enormously increased. I can definitely testify to the accuracy of what Scheidemann has said about the officials; moreover, from those circles where one would have least expected it comes the demand that the Kaiser must go. But the difficulties that will accumulate on the retirement of the Emperor are colossal. The Crown Prince naturally cannot succeed him on the Throne; the Crown would devolve on a minor. [Interruption by Groeber: 'Woe to the land whose King is a child.'] A regency might be considered. One might raise the question of a substitute for the Kaiser."

Erzberger endorsed the Chancellor's view: "No pressure to be brought to bear on the Emperor; for him a voluntary retirement was the only thing."

Drews, the Prussian Home Secretary, discussed the legal position, and drew attention to all questions involved. If a Regency was possible in Prussia it would be possible in the Empire.

Von Payer stuck to his view that it was wrong to influence the Emperor. "If he does not go of his own free will, it might have a bad effect, because then we should probably get worse

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

conditions. One would then seek for the guilty party and point to the Kaiser, not altogether without reasons. The Kaiser will not be able to hold on. Scheidemann is right that it is not a question of the Emperor and the Crown Prince alone but of the whole form of Government, *i.e.* the monarchy itself."

Haussmann referred very seriously to various statements and said: "Tendencies are also facts. Bolshevism seems the most grievous menace, if measures are not now taken against it."

The general trend of nearly all the remarks was this: "If the Kaiser does not go willingly, the peace terms will be appalling, yet, in spite of that, no pressure should be put on His Majesty."

I said this was a weak view to take and was illogical. I tried to make this clear to honorable members, at the same time referring to the fundamental difference between their political opinions and mine. They were Monarchists; I was a Social Democrat and, of course, a Republican. While trying to put myself in their position—that is to say, to assume a Monarchist point of view—the only thing that seemed possible was this: "If they wanted to save the monarchy, they must prevail upon the present monarch to announce his abdication." Honorable members did not draw this conclusion. Though the decision lay with them, they trusted that the Emperor would be more resolute than they themselves. The Cabinet did not seem to be ready to take action in the Kaiser crisis. I naturally could not think of doing anything to dismember it while in this terrible fix. As the whole Party were involved with the Government in the collapse of Imperialism in consequence of Ebert's resolution at the Section meeting, I had to try not to increase the thousand and one evils under which the people were suffering.

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

Ludendorff's Political Stunt

Meanwhile Ludendorff once more took his own political line. He had issued on 24th October an army order to all ranks, in which it was stated that Wilson, by his demand for a military surrender, was asking for something he could not get. Wilson's answer could only mean for soldiers a renewal of resistance with all their might. This new political stunt on his own by Ludendorff filled Prince Max's cup of woe to the brim. He asked the Kaiser to decide—he was to go or Ludendorff. Ludendorff was dismissed; Hindenburg remained, and got a sensible man, General Groener, to help him. The cry, "Away with the Kaiser!" became more vocal, and ever louder became the chorus of voices demanding the abdication of the Crown Prince as well. The number of letters reaching me at the time, saying that the Kaiser must be got rid of, was legion. I had calls from every class of the population; officials and soldiers told me plainly that the Kaiser could not remain. The feeling in the country not only got worse from day to day, but from hour to hour. Others in the political world fared as badly as I did. The Chancellor must have had the cry for the Kaiser's abdication dinned into his ears, although he quoted only one instance. His cousin, Prince Ernest of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, had wired him that in Switzerland the only meaning Wilson's Note had was that the only way to a moderately tolerable peace was via the Kaiser's retirement.

A New Reply to Wilson

In a previous chapter Prince Max has been referred to as having commented unfavourably on politicians whom he was unable to understand. In a particular case he had alluded to Erzberger, the Secretary of State, and myself as being far too

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

much afraid of angering Wilson—he had even used the word servility—by high and mighty talk. Was not he conscious how illogical his remarks were? In despair he had asked a foreign statesman to mediate, and would not understand that he must not anger this man, at any rate till he had performed the service he had asked him to do. The fact should not be overlooked, however, to make the thing complete, that Prince Max in the same connection had spoken of the sound common-sense to which Erzberger and I so exclusively trusted. To be sure, we had more trust in our own common-sense than in the policy of many of the Prince's advisers. What sound common-sense meant in critical situations the Prince was to see very clearly; that is enough punishment for his uncalled-for remarks.

What was to be the reply to President Wilson's last Note, which left no ground for uncertainty? Simons made two drafts for the Chancellor, and the following text was read out at the Cabinet meeting on 26th October:

"The German Government has accepted the provisions that the President has made as the basis of a just peace. Accordingly, it desires to bring about an armistice (but not a laying down of arms), a peace by consent, not a peace by compulsion. A Government answerable to the nation may not yield to a peace by compulsion so long as that nation has power to resist.

"The German Government assumes from the President's Note that he will not require from a democratically governed German people a peace by compulsion, if the new form of Government offers him the guarantee of permanence. The President is aware of the definite changes that have been made, and are still being made, in the German Constitution; the German Government thereby concludes that there is not only a

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

right, but a duty to self-determination that makes it incumbent on the German people, to undertake no reform of its Constitution except what is consonant with its special character and conviction."

This would have been the language worthy of a people whose armies were still intact and could still fight on, and whose leaders had not already in despair cried out for an immediate armistice and peace. In the hopeless plight to which Ludendorff had brought the whole country and its Government, this language was out of place, for it would have certainly provoked Wilson to answer that he was finished with the business, and Messrs. Hindenburg and Ludendorff could go to General Foch with the white flag. In the Prince's book the reading of his draft is described as follows:

"During the reading Scheidemann shouted, 'He'll throw it up, he'll throw it up!' Erzberger and Scheidemann had put their heads together to write a humble note, and now bitterly opposed my draft. There was now no knotty question of tact and taste; both Secretaries of State had ceased to believe in national defence."

This passage is one of the most unintelligible in the book. Whether Erzberger, with whom I was not intimate, intended giving a humble answer, I do not know, but I do not think so. I, who refused to sign the Versailles Treaty because it was too humiliating, certainly did not intend to. I wanted to give an answer that should lead up to the best possible settlement, considering how things were, but certainly not one that should bring us into deeper misery. Every member of the Cabinet knew that Prince Max no longer believed in the possibility of national defence, the *levée en masse*.

After a long discussion the Note appeared in this form:

"The President is aware of the profound changes which have

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

been made in German political life, and are still continuing. The peace negotiations will be conducted by a democratic Government whose powers of decision are permanently fixed by the Constitution of the German Empire. The German Government expects, accordingly, proposals for an armistice, not for a laying down of arms. Only thus could the armistice lead to a just peace, as the President has defined it in his Notes."

The moderated language and more sensible form in our awful position are unmistakable. How completely unjustified the malicious remarks of Prince Max about me were, he confirms on the next page of his own book in a most emphatic way:

"While our Note was coded, Solf, Secretary of State, was present at a supper at Herr von Holtzendorff's house, where, in addition to members of the Federal Council, Ministers of State and an outstanding figure in the commercial world were among the guests. When Solf told us about the text of the Note a unanimous protest followed. All present said that, in view of the present crisis, such a haughty tone was not possible either at home or abroad. We dared not run the risk of Wilson breaking off negotiations. The German people would not stand it. Solf held up the Note on his own responsibility that night, and informed the Cabinet next day. The majority of the Secretaries upheld his action, and considered an express assurance against laying down arms no longer possible. . . ."

The difference between the members of the Federal Council, the Ministers, the outstanding character in the commercial world and myself was that I had already expressed my fears on the morning after the text of the sterner Note was submitted that Wilson might break off negotiations, whereas all the big-wigs, after the text of the more moderate Note was

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

submitted in the evening, exclaimed that Wilson would break off negotiations. These had learnt meantime from a private source of Austria's secession. Next day Prince Max assented to a still more moderate Note. It will not be altogether pleasant for the late Chancellor if he now compares his unjustified remarks with established facts. The apparently brave front presented to the supplicated President, and the absolute timidity shown towards the Kaiser, could really not inspire respect.

Emperor Karl in True Friendship to Emperor Wilhelm

The consultation on the answer to Wilson was held on 26th October. On 27th October the Austrian Ambassador, Prince Hohenlohe, handed Prince Max the copy of a letter which Kaiser Karl had sent to Kaiser Wilhelm.

"27th October, 1918.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"It is my duty, though a grievous one, to tell you that my people are neither able nor willing to continue the War. I have not the right to oppose this desire, as I cherish no hope now of a happy ending, for which moral and physical essentials are lacking, and it would be a crime to shed blood uselessly, and my conscience forbids me.

"Order at home and the principle of monarchy are in the gravest jeopardy if we do not bring this war to an end at once. Even the most brotherly and affectionate regard has to give way to the fact that I cannot save the fortune of those States whose destinies have been entrusted to me by Divine Providence. So I must tell you that I have irrevocably decided to ask for a separate Peace within twenty-four hours and an immediate armistice.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

"I can do nothing else. My conscience as a ruler commands me so to do.

"In true friendship,
"KARL."

The Viennese Beg Berlin for Bread

His Apostolic Majesty, by the grace of God, Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary and Bohemia, etc., informs his dear friend Wilhelm that he must now desert him and his people. This is how monarchist patriots interpreted it. On the evening of the day when this message from one Emperor to another arrived in Berlin came a terrible S.O.S. from Vienna to starving Berlin—"Give us a little bread; we are starving."

The Secretary of State, von Waldow, a staunch Conservative, a Prussian, a Christian and a Monarchist, wanted to refuse. It was inadvisable to give bread away; it would make a bad impression on the working-classes. I vehemently attacked this most unpleasant fellow, a typical Prussian, hated all over the world. "To be sure, Berlin is hungry, all Germany is hungry—and yet these starving millions are ready to share their last crust with their brothers and sisters in Austria, who haven't one. I know I have my Party solid behind me, and I will be fully responsible for the German worker." The Cabinet then voted unanimously ten to twelve tons of bread for Vienna and German-Bohemia. The contrast between the true friendship of kings and their subjects could hardly be more clearly expressed than by this episode.

Reform in a Hurry

To make the changes, announced in the Notes to Wilson in the German Constitution, realities the Reichstag had to work at high pressure. Naturally all this was against the Chancel-

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

lor's grain, and yet the result of our legislation was not unsatisfactory—it was the occasion. This is very true. Now it came home to all that former Governments had for years resisted making reforms in the Constitution that were more than overdue. They had resisted because not one jot or tittle of the monarch's and Junker's privileges should be surrendered. Yet wherever inquiries are made into the inner causes of the collapse of our Fatherland one comes upon the sins of the Prussian Conservatives. These knew well that their list of sins was a very long one. And because they were conscious of the terrible load of sin resting upon them, they did not dare any longer to appear in the old crew, but sported German National colours.

While strenuous work on the Reforms was being done in the rooms of the Reichstag, the Cabinet was like a beehive. It came to no decision on the Kaiser question, though the number of advisers and busybodies grew larger and larger. Prince Max held up the traffic behind the scenes: "Don't push; no pressure is to be used upon him. He's going—going of his own accord." But he did not go, did not think of going. On 28th October the Prince received a visit from General von Chelius, who came straight from Brussels. Von Chelius tried to make the Prince understand that the Kaiser's retirement was an urgent necessity. The Head of the political department of the Governor-General of Belgium, the Ambassador, v. d. Lancken, had given him all kinds of information, which came through an American source. "Unless the Kaiser abdicates, the war will go on and Germany will get a terrible armistice and an equally terrible peace." It should be stated that General von Chelius had been the Emperor's aide-de-camp for many years. Yet he insisted on His Majesty making the great sacrifice to save the dynasty and the country.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Instead of screwing up his courage and saying "Go" to the Kaiser, the Prince hid behind other men whom he requested to approach His Majesty; von Chelius, General Groener, Count Augustus Eulenburg, Court Chaplain von Dryander, etc. All declined. Meanwhile the fire was scorching our finger-tips. Austria said in her petition to Wilson that the Government was ready, without waiting for the result of other negotiations, to treat for peace between Austria-Hungary and the hostile States, and an immediate armistice on all Austro-Hungarian fronts, and requested—

Bulgaria had fallen away, Austria had deserted, the Turks now hardly counted. Self assumed that Austria-Hungary would capitulate without further ado. How long would it be before the Italians came over the Brenner and burst into Bavaria? The loudest cries for help had already reached the "Prussian pigs" from Bavaria. Should they not blow up the Brenner railway at once?

Bolshevist Propaganda

While our endeavour had been directed to come to peace terms as quickly as possible and prevent a catastrophe, we were doing our best to avoid chaos after the despairing cry for help from the Supreme Command. If we wanted to prevent Germany being split up into small States, and hold together as far as we could the hungry working-classes, in order to construct a new Germany after the Peace on a democratic basis, we had to counteract the poisonous Bolshevist propaganda among the workers themselves.

In October, 1918, in the days of our greatest misery, broadsheets were being constantly circulated, especially in Berlin and other big towns, with the object of inciting the workers to Bolshevism. According to these broadsheets, the Govern-

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

ment was made up of murderers, who were, however, vastly better than the traitorous Social Democrats. Apart from the pernicious effect of this literature on the working-classes, it was likely to aggravate Germany's position in the eyes of the Entente from day to day. The contents of these broadsheets naturally got promptly known abroad. Can any fighting man have the slightest fear of a country where there is no discipline (so these broadsheets alleged) nor any bread or fat, where everybody has his knife into everybody else, where the Bolsheviks are only waiting for the moment when they can proclaim the German Soviet Union as a branch establishment of Bolshevik Russia, without let or hindrance? Almost every day brought new variations of this theme. It was clear that the organization required huge sums of money. Who was at the bottom of this propaganda—apart from the Entente Powers? The men in power in Russia, who were planning a world-wide revolution. As they had upset the tyranny of the Tsar through the Bolshevik terror in Russia, so they intended making Germany a happy country by their Asiatic antics. There was certainly more to destroy in our midst than in Russia, for what was the trifling amount of Russian trade and commerce compared with our highly developed German industries? Germany, a land of education for centuries—Russia, a land of millions of illiterates. No, no, we declined with our best thanks the solution of our war troubles by Bolshevik horrors. We also declined the solution of Ludendorff's hardly veiled dictatorship by the clearly manifested dictatorship of Sobelsohn-Radek, Sinowjew, Lenin and Kamenew.

Was there no possibility of detecting the poisoned source of these broadsheets, and putting a stop to them? It was becoming clearer and clearer that the fountain-head was situated

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

in Unter den Linden, in the house of the Russian Legation where Herr Joffe, the agent of Bolshevik Russia, was in residence. The number of Russian couriers, with a vast amount of luggage, boxes and bags, travelling between Moscow and Berlin was enormous. Diplomatic couriers' baggage cannot be touched, nor can the couriers of the Legation. It is extra-territorial holy ground, and cannot be entered or even inspected. But, to put it briefly, it was from the Russian Legation that these missives were circulated; this could not be doubted. What else could there be in these innumerable boxes, arriving in one continual stream from Russia to the Legation? Every Cabinet Minister desired this continuous Bolshevik propaganda to stop, but no one knew the way to do it. When a specially noxious broadsheet, exceeding all limits and highly injurious to the country's vital interests, had been disseminated—we were then corresponding with Wilson—the vexation of Cabinet Ministers considerably increased. At the very start of the meeting on 28th October the Chancellor quite spontaneously leant over the table and asked me to tell him of any way that could put an end to the nuisance. I saw only two possibilities. A higher official might be found willing to "get the sack" for breaking into the Russian Legation on his own with a few sub-officials and stealing the documents. My other proposal was that somebody should instruct a few railway porters in the way of dropping a box they would be carrying downstairs from their shoulders on the stone steps in such a manner that it was bound to break. Then the "tracts" would come tumbling out, proving that the Legation was abusing its extra-territorial privileges, and appropriate action could be taken. The Cabinet had a good laugh over these proposals, but nothing more was said. They first became generally known through the book in which Prince Max let the cat out

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

of the bag. A few days later, Dr. Solf informed us that while transporting the luggage of some Russian couriers the porters had dropped a box at a Berlin railway station and it had burst open. Inside it were Bolshevist broadsheets of the worst kind. On the next day all Russian "diplomatists" were deported. Never before had representatives of a foreign country so grossly abused their privileges.

The Kaiser Is to Go

The Commander-in-Chief, in the Mark, had forbidden the Press to publish the demand for the compulsory abdication of the Emperor. I at once protested in the Cabinet, because the Censorship was a direct contradiction to our policy of reform. I requested complete liberty of discussion of the Kaiser crisis in the Press. The Cabinet opposed it. The attempt was again made to postpone the question. This gave me an opportunity to dictate the following letter and send it off to the Prince:

"Berlin,

"29th October, 1918.

"I have the honour of submitting the following to Your Grand Ducal Highness:

"At a meeting of the Secretaries of State on 28th October the prevalent opinion was that for the time being the order of the Commander-in-Chief forbidding the Press to report the demand for the Emperor's retirement should be tolerated. In the programme that is authoritative for the new Government and was solemnly confirmed by your Grand Ducal Highness at the meeting of the Reichstag on 5th October of this year, it was stated that the Censorship should only interfere, if necessary, in questions of military strategy and tactics, the supply and allocation of war material and in the discussion of rela-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

tions with Governments of foreign countries. The province of the Censorship was strictly limited to these things. According to this programme, at a Cabinet meeting a week or ten days ago, on a motion proposed by Herr Erzberger, Secretary of State, and myself, an agreement was reached whereby all Censorship regulations were to be abolished and the preliminary Censorship set aside. At later discussions in the Cabinet differences of opinion were disclosed. Some of the Secretaries were of opinion that an agreement such as I have mentioned was not reached, and that the old Censorship or another should remain in force. The order issued by the Commander-in-Chief forbidding the mention of the Emperor's abdication makes a deplorable return to a stricter employment of the Censorship inevitable.

"When publicity has been robbed of the possibility of elucidating by discussion a question that is a burning topic of fateful import to the German people, the necessity of debating on it inside the Cabinet and of coming to some decision becomes doubly important. For this reason I find myself forced to lay before the Cabinet the demand that cannot be published in the Press, and it is, namely, this: The Secretaries of State would like to ask the Imperial Chancellor to advise His Majesty to retire of his own free will.

Reasons

"There is no doubt that the great majority of the inhabitants of the German Empire are convinced that the prospects of getting tolerable terms for the Armistice and the Peace are being ruined by the Emperor's remaining in his exalted office. Were an unfavourable peace concluded while the Emperor remains in office, both he and the Government would be reproached for having preferred inflicting heavy trials on

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

the people, to taking a course, entailed by circumstances, for the good of the common weal.

"It cannot be doubted, either, that the peace negotiations would present more favourable prospects if the reforms of the Constitution in the German Empire were made clear at home and abroad by a change in the highest position of the Empire. The present crisis leads us to suppose that the step here proposed can only be postponed, but not avoided. It is therefore better if the Emperor now takes the step entailed by existing circumstances—which is thought the only one possible by many German statesmen—as soon as possible.

"I am your Grand Ducal Highness' most
obedient servant,
"(Signed) PH. SCHEIDEMANN."

The Chancellor was in bed with a slight cold when he sent me word to come and see him next morning. He had worried over my letter all night. It would be easier to secure the voluntary retirement of the Emperor if he, the Prince, were not subjected to such pressure. He harped upon this all the time. On my remarking that the matter should be decided forthwith, he again emphasized the horribly weighty decision. What was the popular feeling?

The feeling grew worse day by day. I never met anyone who had a word to say in favour of the Kaiser remaining. I talked not only with working and business men, but with well-known politicians. One member of the Federal Council said to me that a Federal Prince had written to him, "He must go." In Bavaria there was serious talk about seceding from the Empire. There was really no time to be lost.

A few days later Herr von Payer, who had long ago gained a clear idea of the situation, said to the Prince, "The keenest

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

on overthrowing the Emperor are the respectable citizens. Big financiers and industrials, even officers in high positions, are to be heard saying with astonishing candour, "The Kaiser must retire at once. . . ." The longer the excitement continues, the stronger the demand will be that the monarchy is no longer wanted and a republic should be established."

The Emperor Flies to Headquarters

The Chancellor found out almost by chance, through Freiherr von Grünau on 29th October, that the Kaiser, hitherto in residence at Potsdam, was going off to Headquarters the next night. Prince Max was horrified, and at first thought the news a bad joke. He tried hard to induce the Emperor to give up his plan, but in vain. His Majesty intended going on a jaunt, as he had been fond of doing formerly. The Chancellor went personally to the Kaiser and told him he must not leave Berlin in present circumstances; we had most anxious days before us! "What nonsense! If you do what I've told you, everything will pan out all right." He had the strange idea of letting Wilson go about his business and making friends with England.

How did the Kaiser hit upon this remarkable idea? It was perhaps due to notable efforts by the English King, which the public only got to know something of at the beginning of 1928. In the early days of November, 1918, the King of England may have known that the surrender of the Emperor was one of the peace provisions. The English King wanted to rescue his cousin from this fate, and had requested the Queen of Holland to give him refuge in case of need. The Queen could not refuse, though it was extremely awkward for her. A few days before the Kaiser's flight a Dutch aide-de-camp, as a matter of fact, did turn up at Headquarters,

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

without any outside circles knowing anything about what he wanted.

The probability is that the flight had been carefully planned beforehand. The Emperor saw three courses before him. General Groener, as everybody knows, and other superior officers advised the first: he should enter the trenches and wait till a bullet went through his head. It was too dangerous, and he declined the proposal. The second course, which he had talked over with General Heutsz, was to lead his troops back to Berlin. He considered it possible, till General Groener told him that the Army would go back home under its own generals in peace and order, but not under the leadership of His Majesty. William preferred what seemed to him the least dangerous course and the one best suited to his heroic nature—he bolted!

Unknown Advisers

While I was a member of the Cabinet I had to contend with many difficulties. Now this, now that Secretary of State had spoken with a well-known Social Democrat and had heard views different from mine. When I insisted on being given his name, the answer generally was: "He was one of your principal men." That was all I gathered. To give one instance of what was going on, I will describe a scene from a private conversation that Prince Max had on the afternoon of 31st October with a few of his bosom friends. Neither this private conversation—the Parliamentary Secretaries of State belonging to the Centre and the S.P.D. excluded—nor *tête-à-tête* talks give a satisfactory proof of the Prince's understanding of Parliamentary democratic conditions. I got my knowledge of his "blunders" only from his own book. At this private meeting, as he says in his book, he

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

asserted: "Millions of Germans will not understand the Kaiser's abdication; even among the Unions themselves opinion is much divided. Individual leaders have said that the abdication will be a bombshell." If the Prince, as is to be presumed, meant independent trades unions, his remark is quite silly. There were perhaps different opinions as to when the final demand for retirement should be made, but the Kaiser's withdrawal was generally felt necessary. A dissentient voice here and there does not alter the fact. Dr. Simons reported at the above conversation an interview with Hugo Haase. The latter spoke of the Kaiser's abdication as of a matter of no special interest to him or his friends.

Any reference to Ebert was naturally very awkward for me, especially since I knew he was quoted against me. It is by no means pleasant when third parties on critical occasions are aware of differences of opinion within the Parties. At this same sitting Wahnschaffe, the Under-Secretary, reported a statement of Ebert's: "The general view seems to be that the Kaiser cannot hold on." Ebert was doing all he could to restrain his Party, and was trying to put the brake on by arguing that it would be a greater obstacle to peace if the Party, owing to the Kaiser crisis, left the Government than if the Kaiser did not go. He hoped to restrain the Party Press for a few days longer.

Wahnschaffe added that Ebert had deceived himself about the Party Press, for he had not been able to restrain it; he had it no longer under control. After these remarks from Wahnschaffe the Chancellor asked the Minister Dr. Friedberg what he thought of a Government minus the Social Democrats. Friedberg replied: "It is scarcely possible." This was perfectly right, yet I had not coupled my demand for the abdication of the Kaiser with a threat of retiring at once from

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

the Government should my demand not be granted. But I had got the Chancellor on the hip. If I forced him to decide on the abdication question, which was to him a regular fire-brand, this pressure was the only possible line of action. He had to think of it every moment, and also was sure I could split the Cabinet by retiring if he hesitated further. The Prince naturally caught hold of words such as Wahnschaffe reported to him, as they gave him a breathing space, though only a respite.

On the Kaiser question Ebert took a strange view. I wrote in the *Zusammenbruch* that appeared in 1921 that even in the ranks of the leaders of the Party opinions were held that to me were absolutely strange. I shall never forget how one of my friends made a most violent attack on a highly-educated member of the Party just before the collapse on 9th November because the latter declared the demand for the Kaiser's abdication to be nothing out of the common. This Party friend was no one but Ebert, and his opponent a Social Democrat who has held high positions in the State uninterruptedly since the collapse.

My tactics in the Kaiser crisis in October, 1918, must have been approved by the overwhelming majority of the Socialist Party, as I firmly to-day believe they were. As a Social Democrat, I had and have Republican leanings. After Wilson's Notes it was taken for granted that more moderate terms could be obtained for the Armistice and the Peace if the new democratic system of Government, solemnly guaranteed by Prince Max in his answers to Wilson, were confirmed by the Kaiser's abdication. As is to be gathered from the Prince's books, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, when asked his opinion on the crisis, was of the same opinion as myself: "The German people will not be able to resist the dishonouring terms of

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

the Armistice if the Emperor delays his abdication." Delay and hesitation in matters of policy were mainly responsible for many of the misfortunes that have fallen on the German people.

I repeatedly told the Prince that I could not understand his hesitation. From his point of view as a Monarchist he must have said to himself that he could perhaps only save the monarchical form of government by inducing the Kaiser to abdicate as soon as he could. If the Kaiser had to undergo pressure from his own people, the natural consequence would be that the monarchy would be replaced by a republic. The Chancellor had understood me right enough, but had not the courage to act accordingly. He wanted to save what, in his opinion, could be saved, and gave, without intending to, the last *coup de grâce* to kings, great and small.

A democratic reform of the Constitution had been introduced; it could be continued later on. Let us assume that the Kaiser had abdicated at the right time and a man with modern ideas had taken his place. What then? The Prince's Notes to Wilson would have had effective backing, just as the final demands of the Kiel sailors and those of the Social Democrats would have been satisfied on one material point, even before they were presented. The abdication would have looked like a voluntary act. Now let us speak plainly. A "father of his people," with the powers of censorship in political matters, in speech and telegraph, bound to the strict and rigid laws of a democratic constitution, is on the throne. Does any man believe that revolution would have broken out in Germany to get rid of a ruler of this sort?

Neither in the English House of Commons nor in the Parliaments of Holland, Denmark, Sweden or Norway have Social Democrats or Communists ever proposed the abolition

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

of monarchy. There are good reasons for monarchy in these democratic countries.

After Wilson's Note on 23rd October the Kaiser question seemed to me comparatively plain sailing. The Kaiser must go; if he goes at the right time and a tolerable successor takes his place, the patient German people will put up with him for the time being, probably. If he does not go, a clean sweep will be made, and the monarchy will disappear at once.

I wrote my letter to Prince Max (29th October) without consulting any of my friends. I could not prove it, but I sometimes felt very distinctly that the Chancellor was in touch with one or other of my friends and I was not told about it. As I was sure of the approval of the majority of my Party, I wrote the letter with the intention of bringing things to a head.

Ebert's Attitude in the Kaiser Crisis

As we know from Prince Max's report, Ebert told Wahn-schaffe, the Under-Secretary, that he was going to "lie low" in the Kaiser question. He naturally did not do this for the reasons alleged by the Communists. As a Social Democrat he had Republican leanings, like all his Party colleagues. His peculiar attitude at this time is only to be explained by his optimistic (perhaps it is right to say by his too characteristic) estimation of the situation. As a matter of fact, not only did he assume this attitude on the eve of 9th November in this crisis, but once again on 9th November itself, after the proclamation of the Republic. We shall come back to this later.

On 6th November Wilson's new Note from Washington arrived in Berlin. There was no doubt that the terms of the Armistice and the Peace would be terrible. The Note stated that the Allied Governments had made up their minds on

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

the previous Notes exchanged between the German Imperial Government and Wilson. It stated what the Allies naturally laid down: that occupied territory was not only to be evacuated, but restored. The Allied Governments felt that it should be made quite clear what this proviso really meant. They understood by it that Germany should pay compensation for all damage done to the civilian population and their property by the attacks made upon them by land, sea and air. Wilson's Note concluded with the intimation that Marshal Foch had been authorized by the Government of the United States to receive duly accredited representatives of the German Government and inform them of the terms of the Armistice.

Not a word about negotiations. The enemy would settle what terms Germany must accept if the desired Armistice should be granted.

On the day this Note arrived the S.D. Section met the Party Select Committee to consider the Kaiser problem, after they had been acquainted with the contents of the latest Note from Wilson. I had to leave the meeting early, as I had official business to attend to at Wilhelmstrasse. In his memoirs, the Prince says that I said this to him about this meeting:

"We must most certainly reckon on official action in the question of abdication. At the moment there are two contending currents. One portion of the Party insists on an ultimatum with a time limit; the other would be satisfied if the Select Committee publicly gave its assent to the letter written by Scheidemann to me. Scheidemann apprehended that the question of a monarchy would become a question of a Republic if it were not speedily settled. The excitement among the working-classes was intense; he hoped things would quiet down through the pending Armistice—but only if abdication had already come about."

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

I considered an ultimatum with a time limit a matter of course when I informed the Prince of it. However, the various Party branches took exception. The following resolution was passed:

“Both Section and Select Committee demand that the Armistice comes into force without delay. The Section and Select Committee also require an amnesty for military offences and release from prison of all soldiers who have offended against discipline. They require the immediate democratizing of the Government, as well as of the administration of Prussia and other Federal States. The Reichstag Section and the Select Committee authorize the Party management to inform the Chancellor that the Section and Select Committee definitely approve and support the steps taken by the leaders of the Party in the Kaiser problem, and expect a speedy settlement of the question.”

I thought this resolution a regrettable and almost irreparable half-measure. It is to be quite understood that my continuous pressure on the Prince had been increasingly distasteful to him. He accordingly tried to win over other members of the Party, whom he thought more amenable to his policy of delay. Here is his own story:

“The terms of the Armistice might arrive any day. We had disorder in the country, and revolutionary unrest was increasing from hour to hour. ‘The Kaiser won’t give in,’ was the battle cry of those plotting revolution. When would the Social Democrats take it up? The position seemed really hopeless; yet I had to say to myself, the last attempt has not yet been tried. The Chancellor must speak to the Emperor. I made up my mind to go to Headquarters on the morrow.

“Before this I intended to let two of the leaders of the Social Democrats into the secret, and ask them to give me a

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

couple of days' rest while away. I would select two who had no Party axes to grind at this moment of national crisis, Ebert and David. I hoped to ask them to spare me this insistence on ultimatums as long as I should be at Headquarters. . . ."

I will waste no words on the childish attempts made by the Prince to split the Social Democrats into two camps more or less nationally reliable. Next morning an article appeared in the *Vorwärts* that appealed to my soul. "No one whose mind is alive to modern times will turn his heart away from the masses; he will not do so even if he cannot approve of everything that goes on." The Prince was horrified on reading this. He says in his book:

"Did the Party stand behind this article? I saw Ebert in the early forenoon alone in the garden. I first told him of my intended journey. 'You know what I intend. If I succeed in convincing the Kaiser, shall I have you at my side in my fight against Social Revolution?'"

"Ebert's reply came without hesitation or double meaning: 'If the Kaiser does not abdicate, Social Revolution must come. But I don't want it; I hate it like sin.'"

After the Kaiser's abdication, the Prince goes on to say, Ebert hoped to rally the Parties and the masses to the support of the Government.

"We touched upon the question of a regency. I mentioned Prince Eitel Frederick as the Constitutional Regent for Prussia and the Empire. Ebert, on his own behalf and his Party's, said they would make no difficulties for the Government in these constitutional questions. Then he wished me success on my journey in excited language. David, whom I saw directly afterwards, was not less decided in his aversion to the Revolution."

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

What this Princeps Cunctator understood by "Revolution" was quite different from what Ebert, Dr. David, I and the whole of the S.P.D. hated—Russia's Asiatic Bolshevism.

Wild Days in Kiel

While the Cabinet was racking its brains over Wilson's Notes, unsatisfactory interviews with Ludendorff and attempts to get round the Kaiser problem like a cat mewing round boiling milk, the country was in a growing state of ferment. The feeling in the Navy was particularly ugly. At Cabinet meetings the Secretary of the Navy Department, von Mann, usually sat on my left. On 4th November, the sitting having already begun, he entered the room in what was obviously a state of great excitement, sat down next to me and handed me some telegrams from Kiel. . . . What was this? No doubt was possible: it was open mutiny; it might be more serious than that—a spark in the powder flask! In Kiel everything was topsy-turvy, but—and this was the last glimmer of hope—the sailors were calling out for a member of the Reichstag, a member of the Reichstag majority, to be sent forthwith to Kiel, and a man of action only was wanted.

Before the news of the incident was given to the Cabinet I telephoned Ebert at the Party Bureau, and to Noske, who was in the Reichstag. Ebert said he quite agreed to Noske being sent to Kiel. The Cabinet decided to send Haussmann, Secretary of State, to Kiel with Noske.

News like that from Kiel followed fast from Lübeck, Schwerin, Flensburg, Cuxhaven, Brunsbüttel and Hamburg. The sailors' demands were almost everywhere the same: Immediate abdication of the Emperor, Amnesty, Armistice, Peace, the Vote! Noske's first report arrived on the night of 5th to 6th November. He had taken over command of

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

the town and ordered the surrender of arms. He requested that no military attack should be made on Kiel, and asked how far the Cabinet would approve of the sailors' demands. During the Cabinet's discussion of the report Noske had a talk over the telephone with von Mann, Secretary to the Admiralty. At present everything was quiet in the town. The sailors attached great importance to the grant of an amnesty. The retirement or deposition of the Emperor was absolutely necessary. Noske believed in a return to the old order of things, if proper concessions were made. New messages of comfort reached the Cabinet. Forty sailors had turned up in Wittenberg; these were arrested. The railway station at Lübeck was occupied by mutineers, also at Schwerin and Cuxhaven. In Kiel, where a soldiers' council had been set up, the order to avoid bloodshed had gone forth. The marines were told they could disband if they first gave up their arms.

Count Roedern moved that the Fleet should be demobilized. I supported granting their terms, except those that required the assent of the Reichstag, such as the Vote. Exemption from punishment should be promised, as well as an amnesty and the immediate release of those previously sentenced, save for grave offences. Noske should remain on in Kiel and be invested with absolute powers. I had often spoken so plainly on the Kaiser problem that further remarks from me were superfluous.

Erzberger was in favour of an immediate amnesty, and release of prisoners if order was restored in Kiel by 6 P.M.—at 6 P.M., mind you, and not a minute later. He did not say a word about removing the Kaiser.

Hausmann, who had already returned from Kiel, agreed with Erzberger. Scheuch, Minister of War, attacked Count

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

Roedern—no demobilization of the Fleet. Von Payer had received a petition for equal franchise from 10,000 soldiers in Friedrichsort. All other demands were similar to those of the sailors at Kiel. Count Roedern proposed the Kaiser's immediate return to Berlin. Dr. Simons said that the Prince had already done everything to induce him. At this moment the Chancellor entered the meeting: "Scheidemann is wanted by Noske on the telephone—matter urgent." I telephoned Noske thus: "Tell the soldiers and workers that the Government are perfectly unanimous on the amnesty question. We are also agreed that exemption from punishment shall be granted to all who have committed breaches of discipline. From these conditions must be naturally excluded all who have committed grave offences; we are in agreement with the demands made, provided that the men return to their usual duties and surrender all arms and ammunition seized by them. Within a few days the Armistice and negotiations for peace will begin. Impress upon the men that negotiations will be grievously endangered if the enemy get to know of what has happened in Kiel. It is therefore imperative that order should be established at once. The men are to return to duty at once, and then everything can be regarded as finished and done with. Tell the men, too, that their political demands—the grant of the Vote, etc.—though passed locally, cannot possibly be carried out by the Government. These are matters that can only be decided by the Reichstag. The Reichstag is meeting as soon as armistice negotiations begin. I hope the men will recognize this, and that everything will be quiet again to-night."

I answered Noske's question by saying that the Kaiser crux was in the balance. A decision would probably be taken in the next few days. My words were taken down in shorthand at my request by an officer on duty. After receiving the

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

report, the Government approved of my action in my conversation with Noske. Noske's last telegram before 9th November was dated 7th November, and ran thus: "I have been obliged to take over the control of the Navy in Kiel. I cannot yet say how it is to be managed. If there are 'outbreaks' it cannot possibly be done. Haase assured me that peace should not be disturbed. He was expecting a like promise from Berlin. Wahnschaffe told me on the telephone this morning, when I informed him how matters were here, that the Government expected me to stop on here as long as possible. I am anxious to know whether it still desires this."

The Kiel sailors had probably given up all hope of their demands being granted. They heard nothing about the main thing—the Kaiser's abdication, that everybody expected, from the Bavarian Government as well as the lowest Kiel cabin-boy; they were leaving Kiel wholesale and turning up in Hamburg, Munich, Cologne and Königsberg.

Causes of the Kiel Outbreak

Formerly one heard that the navy officers and the common sailors were on much better terms with each other than the army officers and men. It may be that in times gone by such a difference did exist, but it could only have been microscopic. In war these small differences very soon disappear. At the start there was only one heart and one mind; then, bit by bit, the nearer one approached the end, the home and the barracks, the invariably increasing arrogance, especially of those superior officers whose military capacity was in inverse ratio to their snobbishness and brutality, was revealed. Hats off to those officers who really shared the utter misery, the terribly hard work, the last crust, hardship and death with the common soldier. They lie in their tens of

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

thousands alongside hundreds of thousands of their "common" comrades in foreign soil.

On the floating coffins, over which Germany quarrelled with the whole world, instead of allying herself with Great Britain, as her Government thrice desired at the beginning of the century, were crews the greater part of whom had been in the service since 1910. Fancy being seven or eight years on board one and the same ship in conditions that become worse with every month, till they finally grew intolerable! Readers of this book do not require to be told about turnips and marmalade, the notorious food for heroes that was to rouse fresh pluck, fighting spirit and moral courage. At first the rationing was better managed on board the ships than in the armies fighting in France, Russia and the Balkans. Then it rapidly deteriorated. "In the prison in Rendsburg the food was better than on H.M.S. *Frederick the Great* in 1917," said a sailor who had been sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude for mutiny. Yes, it was a fact: miserable food, exacting work, favouritism of all kinds in granting leave, unfair treatment by officers; the conditions becoming more unbearable, and punishments falling like hail on the youngsters in blue. From the outbreak of war to the end of 1917 sentences had been given totalling 180 years' and five weeks' imprisonment, 181 years and one month penal servitude, and ten sentences to death. . . .

On 1st and 2nd August there was a big "riot" on H.M.S. *Prinz Luitpold* that led to a court-martial on board, and ended with sentences of death and imprisonment. The court-martial judges were starting a campaign against a political conspiracy—high treason, treachery to the State. They scented a connection with the Independent Socialist Party, that had established centres on the ships for revolutionary pur-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

poses in order to immobilize the fleet entirely. Dittmann's evidence before the Sub-Committee of Inquiry of the Reichstag in the spring of 1926, derived from secret documents, fairly made our blood boil. The Independent Socialist Party, as it was convincingly proved, had nothing to do with revolutionary movements inside the Navy. The sailors summoned before the Committee of Inquiry were most severely cross-examined on their evidence. The whole business had been worked up by spies, as could be absolutely clearly proved. Anyone peaceably inclined and only desirous of defending the country, but opposed to annexations, was a rascal. To support the Fatherland's Party was the bounden duty of every officer serving. In the Chief Select Committee of the Reichstag, Capelle, the Secretary of State for the Navy, was violently attacked because naval officers were quite openly agitating for the objects of the Fatherland's Party. He accordingly wrote to Kiel forbidding the publication of the Munich *Lehmann-Verlag*.

"I most respectfully beg the Imperial Command to disapprove on principle of such literature being circulated among the crews."

This brought him into conflict with Prince Henry, the Commander-in-Chief of the Baltic Fleet. He deprecated such interference. Appealing to H.M. the Emperor, he wrote back:

"I regret being unable to grant Your Excellency's request."

A direct snub to Berlin from the highest command in the Navy.

All the sailors and stokers examined by the courts-martial gave the following as the cause for their discontent: bad and insufficient food, refusal of leave and bad treatment. Calmus, a sailor on board the *Rheinland*, had his complaints thus answered by his captain, "It does not matter to us whether you are overworked or not; the principal thing is that the ship is

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

in fighting trim. Sailors are a minor matter; we can always get as many as we want."

With what unscrupulousness Dr. Dobring, the advocate of the court-martial, stated his charges is shown by the following words:

"The Association whose nerve centre was discovered on H.M.S. *Friedrich der Grosse* is connected with the Independent Socialist Party. Its object is to launch propaganda for immediate peace by refusing to supply any war material on which the Service is wholly dependent."

It was proved that all these statements were false. At the preliminary inquiry such is the evidence of a sailor called Adomeit. He was told he had been convicted, and that as he would be shot or imprisoned for life, he had better confess. He had nothing to confess, and was acquitted. He later lodged a protest against the report on his evidence because it had been "faked."

In the sentence on the other defendants the charges of "mutiny in war-time and treason" were advanced without legal proof. Sentences of penal servitude fell fast and furious, and on 26th August, 1917, five men were sentenced to death. In the legal report that had to be submitted to Capelle, Secretary of State, before the sentence was pronounced, the counsel for the Admiralty said:

"The evidence of the crime having been committed is not to be regarded as complete, as a real mutiny has not yet broken out. He is therefore only guilty of attempted mutiny."

Notwithstanding, the death sentences were pronounced. According to court-martial regulations a legal report had to be drawn up after the sentence by way of confirming it. The counsel, Debary, drew it up. He came to the same conclusion

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

as the counsel for the Navy had previously, that a death sentence should not have been passed.

In his book, "Vom Segelschiff zum U-Boot" ("From Sailing Ship to Submarine"), Admiral Scheer writes:

"The right of confirming sentences rested with the Admiral in command. I could have renounced this right and have submitted them to the Supreme War Lord for decision, which depended on the legal opinion submitted by the Imperial court-martial, and which the Emperor would probably have followed. But why should I try to put the responsibility on the Kaiser when the right of confirmation rested with me? Here was a case for vigorous action. In the case of both of the chief conspirators the death sentence was carried out."

The Admiral of the Fleet, von Scheer, therefore feared that the Emperor, on the strength of a fresh report, might have had to revoke the sentences.

This same Admiral was the man who, by his own mutinous conduct against the Government, provoked the Navy to resistance against its leaders and stimulated the Revolution from Kiel. Although Prince Max's Government had, at Ludendorff's request, entered into negotiations with Wilson, and the U-boat war had been stopped, Scheer went on intriguing against the Government independently. In a note to the Kaiser in 1916 he wrote thus:

"There can be no doubt that even the most successful fleet action will fail to force England to make peace in this war."

He confidently says in his book that after Ludendorff's telegram at the end of September, 1918, he was of this opinion:

"After the break up of Bulgaria and Austria, nothing was left us but to own up that we had lost the War."

Yet, in spite of this, shortly before the end it occurred to the Admiral that he might still win a quick victory over

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

England; so he issued the following order on 28th October, 1918:

"The high-sea fighting forces are to be prepared to engage and attack the English Fleet."

The crews found out that the ships with their crews were to be foolishly and aimlessly sacrificed, and they refused to take the ships out. Had Scheer's order been obeyed, it would have made no difference at all to the result of the War, but we should have had to pity and mourn for tens of thousands more dead and thousands of widows and orphans more to-day.

The Kaiser for the White Flag

The position at the front meanwhile got worse and worse. On 8th November the Kaiser asked Herr von Grünau, the liaison officer between him and the Chancellor, to wire to Berlin that his inclination to return there was only a very slight one. The Kaiser further informed the Chancellor that the terms of the Armistice could probably only be known by going between Army and Army—mind you, it was the Kaiser himself who suggested on 5th November going to Foch with an abject petition under the protection of the white flag. This step, after the Government had been treating officially for weeks with Wilson, would have meant unconditional surrender. On 2nd November the War Minister, Scheuch, reported that, according to Bavarian military officers, the Bavarian troops would not hold out any longer.

Held, later the Bavarian Premier, was said to have mooted the possibility of a separate peace quite frankly, as was reported at the same Cabinet meeting. Held's statement was strongly challenged by Dandl, then Premier. Dandl had to admit, however, that in Upper and Lower Bavaria and on the Bohemian border there had been much talk about a separate

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

peace. A direct threat to the Bavarian borders would have a far-reaching effect on popular sentiment. Yet he asked them not to take Bavarian abuse too seriously. The Vice-Chancellor, however, stoutly affirmed that there was to-day much talk in Bavaria that was not in harmony with any great devotion to the Empire.

On 5th November General Groener protested against the Kaiser's view; on 6th November he told the Chancellor that we should have to go over with the white flag. The Prince's question, "Surely not for a week?" was answered by the General: "That is too long; Saturday is the last day!" This occurred, as stated, on the Saturday, 6th November. Three days later was the 9th!

Prince Max was troubled in these days by a special worry. He had a feeling that a request from him to resign might now be accepted. What would happen then? "I found out later that Scheidemann has been sounded, at the request of the Head of the Civil Cabinet, as to whether the Kaiser would stay where he was if he, Scheidemann, would take over the Chancellorship." The Prince's information was correct. Unfortunately, he does not tell us what reply I gave the gentlemen. While Prince Max mentioned Count Brockdorff-Rantzau as a suitable Chancellor, Dr. Simons pointed to Ebert.

Hannemann, Forward!

One could in no way compare this shilly-shally prince with Fabius Cunctator. The Roman dallier pursued a wise plan of action that suited the circumstances; he wanted to banish the Hannibal bogey, and was playing for time in order to revive again the spirits of the Roman people that had sunk to zero. The Baden shilly-shallier thought of the afflicted German people seemingly not at all. As if hypnotized, he

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

stared at William II., and went on delaying and angering the people. "How can I act freely when Scheidemann is pressing for the Kaiser's abdication?" he cried in despair. On 7th November he saw Ebert alone in the garden. The Social Democrats should again withdraw their ultimatums. The Chancellor wanted to inspire Ebert with fresh hopes: he in person would go to Headquarters and induce the Kaiser to announce his resignation. Who would believe that? The position was quite clear. The Prince had only to pull himself together—and he had not the courage. He clutched at all sorts of fantastic ideas. He divided Social Democrats according to some mysterious principle into two classes—good and bad—and separated the sheep from the goats. I was in his bad books owing to my persistence. But Ebert would, he fancied, repeat Noske's performances at Kiel on a grand scale and "check the movement throughout the country."

When would the Prince go to the Kaiser? He was always urging on others to do so: "Please go, General Groener—Now you, Secretary Drews—Well, you will, Delbrück—Do go, Your Excellency"—but no one was willing to put pressure on the Kaiser, for he had to go of his own accord. "Well now, Hannemann, you go; you've the biggest boots!"

At last the S.D. Section of the Reichstag lost patience. At the afternoon sitting on 7th November the ultimatum was drawn up—Eisner agitated in Munich and the King abdicated. It was high time. The resolution was passed *nem. con.*, and was to be forwarded to the Chancellor during the sitting. The resolution's terms were these:

1. The prohibition of public meetings (yesterday's, for example) shall be suspended.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

2. Police and military to be exhorted to use the greatest discretion.

3. The Government of Prussia to be immediately remodelled on Reichstag-majority lines.

4. Social Democratic influence to be reinforced in the Reichs-Government.

5. The abdication of the Kaiser and the renouncement of the Crown Prince to the succession to the Throne to be effected by Friday midday, 8th November.

Should these demands not be granted, Social Democrats would leave the Government. Simultaneously a new warning to the workers was issued urging them to moderation.

Prince Max complained that this ultimatum knocked the bottom out of his policy as Chancellor. His journey to see the Kaiser was now useless. But his procrastinatory mind was once more in evidence in what he wrote after receiving the ultimatum from Ebert and me:

"Immediately after the ultimatum came to hand one of my fellow workers shouted out to David: 'What disloyalty. This very morning the pact was made between you and the Chancellor.' His answer was: 'Don't talk about it. I too regret the step. It passes my understanding.' The Prince did not wish, as he says, to act in anger. So I authorized Simons to make one last appeal to the Social Democrats to come to terms. He should go to the Reichstag to Ebert and try to get him to retract formally the ultimatum and take steps to hush it up. For this purpose I instructed Simons to say that I was going off to Spa that night. Simons returned very quickly. Ebert had refused an honourable retreat: 'To-night twenty-six meetings are being held in all the big assembly rooms. To-night we must announce the ultimatum

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

from every platform; otherwise all of us will join the Independents."

"Ebert had changed completely round. Simons seemed unexpectedly resolute; Ebert appeared to be suddenly stretching out his hand for the leadership of the State. So strong was this impression that Simons asked him, "Then you want to be Chancellor?" Ebert replied, "That's not yet settled."

If hitherto one had only heard cracks in the main joints of the Empire, now a crackling of the smaller ones was distinctly audible. When would the end come? Prince Max was handing in his letter of resignation to the Emperor. Its language was more than pitiable; even at the last moment it did not tell the Kaiser the truth—there wasn't a word about the necessity of his resignation. Yes, there was—a most submissive mention at the end, that "the Prince would continue to carry on the business of the State till a decision was reached."

"Berlin,

"7th November, 1918.

"TO HIS MAJESTY THE EMPEROR AND KING.

"Your Majesty is aware that the so-called War Cabinet, in spite of my earnest and direct warnings, has been dragging your august Person into our discussions for some time. It first began during my absence. But after Scheidemann, the Secretary of State, informed me by letter that his Party expected me to advise Your Majesty to renounce the Throne, and after I had tried in vain to get him to withdraw his letter, I had to take action. I read out to the Cabinet a written statement in which I forbade any pressure being put upon Your Majesty to resign the Throne, nor would I advise Your Majesty to do so if I were consulted by him. . . .

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

"I had, notwithstanding, made up my mind, after long consideration of circumstances and reasons, to see Your Majesty this evening and amplify the information given to Your Majesty on my behalf by Delbrück and Drews, Ministers of State. But this afternoon Schiedemann and Ebert brought me an ultimatum in the name of the Social Democratic Party, in which *inter alia* the demand was made that the renunciation of Your Majesty to the Throne should be announced to the people to-morrow afternoon. My efforts to convince both Party leaders of the ominous character of this demand for the Fatherland were unsuccessful. The Party leaders are convinced that very extensive riots will break out to-night in Berlin if they are unable to pacify the mob with the prospect of this intelligence. . . ."

If the Prince had only had for a single day the reins of Government really in his hands he could have said to the Emperor a week earlier, "You must abdicate; things are like this." Instead of trusting me, who had been sent into his Cabinet as a representative of the S.P.D., and following my advice, he invariably caught hold of the coat-tails of others, thinking, in his folly, that a Party millions strong would dance to anybody's tune. If I did say sometimes to him that I had to consult my friends on the question, he took this for dependence. Would it have suited him better if I had assented or dissented to what he said and been disowned by my Party? In one of the last Cabinet meetings, just before the collapse, our ultimatum was discussed, and thoroughly "damned" by all the Secretaries of State. I repudiated the idea that the S.P.D. was mainly responsible for the ultimatum. The heaviest responsibility rested on the Kaiser, who refused to sacrifice himself, which he ought to have done

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

long ago in the interests of his people; the Chancellor had always dallied, and the Cabinet as well that had supported his policy. "All of you bear a heavy responsibility, not we." Herr von Payer was very upset because I thought the Chancellor could bring about the Emperor's abdication within twenty-four hours over the telephone. No one could suppose anyone could do that. The trouble with the non-Socialist members of the Government was that they did not understand a historical crisis, and clung on tight to formalities up to the last moment. The Kaiser crisis had been acute for nearly two weeks—these gentlemen let day after day go by. I simply had to draw their attention to the telephone. They could get connected in five minutes, and then could tell the Kaiser all about the state of affairs. They did not understand that historical crises in certain circumstances could be decided within a minute. How pitiable is the assurance in the Prince's letter of resignation to the Kaiser of his having warned the Cabinet! Probably they would have been unsurpassable heroes in the field, but they had no moral courage, worse luck, in politics. There had been some talk of employing soldiers owing to meetings being prohibited on the evening of 6th November. As I had repeatedly done non-officially before and after Cabinet meetings, I warned them once more about playing with fire. Stop shooting! I certainly did my very best to see that no more blood should flow after four years' slaughter, happen what might. I often referred to the fact that soldiers would not fire on working-men who had been, almost without exception, in the trenches. To avoid this catastrophe, I proposed that all shooting should be forbidden. I was repeatedly told later that all orders not to shoot were chiefly due to me. This was told also to others, and I was given

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

great credit for having brought off the bloodless victory of revolution. These words occurred in a book called the "Noskegarde," by E. Hellmann. At any rate, it was a recognition of having done something. I gratefully accept the compliment. I must refer to a remark by the Prince, according to which I let the cat out of the bag at a Cabinet meeting about my knowing of his mysterious talk with Ebert. It is possible some casual eyewitness may have mentioned to me at the time that the Prince had met one of my Party comrades secretly in the garden, and I had alluded to the mysterious meeting at a Cabinet sitting. I have no recollection of it now. To the conversation itself I made no sort of allusion, though it would have been no great effort of brain-power to guess what the subject was. Probably in this case the Prince's not over-easy conscience read more into my words than they actually contained.

The Prince's Trust in Ebert

Though Ebert had repeatedly, as we have seen, sorely disappointed the Prince, the latter was well disposed to him.

"My confidence in Ebert stood firm. The man was determined to fight the Revolution tooth and nail. I summed up the situation in the night in the following way: The words, attributed to the Kaiser, 'I will yield only to force,' had borne fruit. Scheidemann's temperament, always hard to control when he scents revolution in the air, had been shocked by the news from the country, by military action at the Lehrter railway station, and generally by the feeling of suspense now brooding over Berlin.

"Ebert's confidential disclosure won't have pacified, but angered him; it perhaps has roused the wish that the Party, and not the Prince, should persuade the Kaiser to abdicate.

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

But the dominant feeling was certainly that we have lost the masses if we do not do something to please them forthwith. Ebert under his influence would have succumbed to panic; he struck a revolutionary attitude to stave off revolution."

It would have been much more beneficial for Germany and the Prince if he had slept sounder o' nights and dreamt less. The Prince had talked about my temperament and the atmosphere of revolution that I scented. True it is that I often had a hard job to keep my temper under. My finger-tips had been itching for weeks; I felt a convulsive twitching in the body of the people, and clearly pictured whatever did come to pass. How willingly would I have thrown at the feet of the Prince and his morally Imperialistic friends my patent as Secretary of State, and shouted in their faces, "What do you think you're doing? Will you stem the tide of millions of long-tortured, daily deluded and cheated folk? Will you swim against a stream that runs faster as you look at it? You, yes, you, who couldn't even pluck up enough courage to tell the Kaiser to go! What will you do here?—you dreamers, dalliers, visionaries. Go to the devil!"

Even at the meeting of the S.D. Section an atmosphere prevailed that seemed to me so mysterious that I almost despaired. I had reported the proceedings in the Reichstag at one of the last sittings before 9th November, and asked for leave to retire in case the Kaiser had not done ditto by the next forenoon. "The Cabinet had not the courage to take the absolutely necessary consequences, and was postponing what could not be postponed. The Section could not take the responsibility; neither could, nor would, I. An ultimatum with a short time-limit must be drawn up in any circum-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

stances. Then there was an argument, in which some colleagues advised against drawing up an ultimatum with such a short time-limit—if they did, the Reichstag majority would go to pieces. I was not a little astonished at such a view of the situation, and took a strong stand against any waiting-and-hoping tactics at a time when we were face to face with the greatest crisis in German history. “Don’t you feel that we are on the brink of the collapse of the Empire—and a collapse of the Reichstag majority is feared? Now we have to stand at the head of the movement; otherwise we shall have anarchy in the country. We must surely feel it in our fingertips that the movement from Kiel and Hamburg may to-day, to-morrow or next day spread to Berlin. Perhaps the worst can be avoided if the Kaiser abdicates at once, and if, in addition to the amnesty, the complete democratization of the Reich, States and communities is sanctioned in a form that is binding on all.”

Otto Braun and Wels bravely backed me up, but the “statesmen” in the Section won the day. Otto Braun exclaimed, in justifiable anger, that he could no longer support a policy of this sort. He could hardly be kept from leaving the room. The Section forbade my retiring from the Government. The time for the ultimatum had not come. When it did come next day, in spite of all the efforts of the Baden Prince, the Chancellor, as we have seen, nearly fell off his chair in fright.

On the Day Before the End

Among the working classes the excitement was intense. Big public meetings that were to have been held on 6th November were forbidden, as well as the establishment of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils. The air was growing oppressive and sultry before the storm. General von Linsingen

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

confidently answered one of Prince Max's questions about the safety of the capital by saying he could hold Berlin. Scheuch, then Minister of War, considered Berlin absolutely safe; he built his hopes on the 4th Jäger Regiment.

In spite of these assurances, a few scales fell from the Prince's eyes, for he telegraphed to the Kaiser, after his request to resign, that any action by force against the people who were demanding the abdication meant civil war. The majority of the troops would go over to the revolutionaries; the King in Bavaria and the Duke in Brunswick had already abdicated.

During the forenoon reports were received from many parts of the Empire of a popular rising that was carrying all before it. Though the demands made may have varied in details, there was one demand that was unanimous from Kiel to Munich—Away with the Kaiser! The revolt in Munich upset the Prince particularly. But he was always an unteachable dreamer. He informed the Kaiser by telephone and telegraph of the position in the country, and now advised him even—it sounds almost incredible—to abdicate; he would not accept the S.D. ultimatum, but planned his policy in such a way that the Crown should not surrender to Social Democracy, but that Social Democracy should be forced to surrender to the Crown.

"Pigs will be pigs," as they say in Berlin. They're past praying for.

It was reported in the Cabinet meeting that soldiers with red ribbons were already to be seen in the streets. Dr. Solf saw Germany already in the hands of the Bolsheviks, on whose proscription lists my name was given; that had been told him definitely. "Scheidemann," so the Prince says in his book, "was a high-spirited man. I had only one

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

anxiety—that the troops might come back home in gangs.” “And then,” quoting my words, “came a fine prophecy, that later became true: ‘My Party will take care that Germany is insured against Bolshevism.’”

The Kaiser Jibs

The Kaiser telegraphed himself from Headquarters to Berlin (8th November) that he would consider the Chancellor’s request to resign after the Armistice was concluded. All further matters (about his retirement) would be decided by the circumstances then prevailing. Freiherr von Grünau’s words were clearer in his telegram: “His Majesty has refused to abdicate.” All the Prince’s boats had been washed away. His last S.O.S. must here be recorded.

“I still stick to my opinion: If the Emperor had taken the safe course I pointed out to him—before 8 P.M. on the 8th, and even up to 9 A.M. on the 9th, before the crowds got on to the streets—we should have had no revolution, no republican councils, no Kapp-Putsch, no murder of Erzberger. . . . What the October Government had achieved would have been preserved, the path of reform would have been followed out on the strict lines of tradition without embittering the masses or forcing it, as the masses think, upon them. . . .”

What the Prince here says is correct, except on one point, and that the most important one. The Kaiser could have been got rid of if the Prince had done his duty at the right time. The charges the Prince brings against the Kaiser in his belated cry of complaint apply fully to himself. What he sticks to, so late in the day, was only the idea that I forced upon him repeatedly and at the right time: “If you wish to save anything, then act quickly—quickly, I say.” On the morning of 30th October, while discussing with him my letter



SCHEIDEMANN SPEAKING FROM A WINDOW OF THE PALACE
OF THE CHANCELLOR (OF THE EMPIRE) DURING THE DAYS OF
THE REVOLUTION

of the day before, I personally mentioned a time limit of twenty-four hours. But he would have no pressure brought to bear upon him, because the Kaiser should go voluntarily.

The Prince's cry of complaint is the strongest condemnation of himself and the best justification of my conduct as a member of his Government. He classed me among the bad sheep or the goats, because I told him at all times and places to the best of my knowledge the unvarnished truth. That many men cannot abide this I found out from others besides Prince Max. Much more acceptable than I was were those who roused hopes in his mind that could not be realized, and his book proves this on every page.

At a Section Meeting on 8th November

The S.D. Reichstag Section maintained all through the critical days before the end of all things a philosophic calm that must have amazed anyone with knowledge of it. Twenty hours before the stampede of hundreds of thousands from the factories, the Section met—8th November at twelve noon—to consider a report from me on the negotiations of the Government. What was the resolution it passed?

“After the Chancellor's statement that he had communicated yesterday's ultimatum of the Section to the Emperor, the Section, with a view not to jeopardize the armistice negotiations, did not desire the retirement of the Chancellor, and would also not approve of the withdrawal of its members from the Government unless and until the Armistice was an accomplished fact.”

There were no signs of philosophic calm in the artisan quarters in Berlin. The big factories were seething with excitement. The machines seemed to be working faster and the wheels grating louder. The shouts of the workers sounded

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

angrier; the curses of the Spartacists and Communists against the Majority Socialists were more bitter; the furnaces grew hotter. Everything was in a fever. . . . In the Section, where hearts were beating louder and quicker than usual, members kept their heads, but among men of the horny fist the reverse was the case. They saw nothing of the countless difficulties which must arise when the end came. The prevalent feeling was that the present state of chaos was too grievous to be borne; rather a final "bang up" than this unending suspense that was wearing us out, world without end! This was the feeling that gradually spread everywhere and was over all. "Why this delay? Why doesn't Willy go? Ludendorff has prayed on his knees for peace and an armistice because he can fight no more. Why isn't peace made? Willy won't leave his manger. Are we to go on starving and running round in rags because of this? . . ."

The heads of the S.P.D. were having a bad time with the political rankers and unskilled workmen of the Radical factions in the factories. Again and again they had to restore them to reason, thereby bringing on their heads the charge of being funks and blacklegs. They bore everything like well-disciplined, class-conscious working-men, and did their duty and their job. Hats off to the loyal pioneers of the German working-classes, these calm and collected heroes, who for their honest convictions swallowed the worst of insults, stuck it out, and carried on with what their Unions told them was their task. These are the men whom Germany has to thank in the first instance for her rescue from Bolshevism, for these are they who, in spite of all temptations, stood their ground and remained faithful to the flag to which they had sworn allegiance. What would have been the good of all the warnings of their

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

leaders and advisers if they had not been conscious of what was at stake? They had stiffened themselves in class warfare, and as workers had been able to resist—and did resist—the enticements of Russian Communists, because they had been politically and industrially educated in contrast to the Radicals, whom the Communists recruited from the dregs of the German Labour movement that had been torn asunder in 1914 and could not be patched for six years at least. The skilled workers of Germany, trained by the constructive work of the Social Democratic Party, were able to pat themselves on the back, proud of their convictions, when the attempt was made to win them over to Bolshevism—a barbaric Asiatic caricature of scientific Socialism—and they later could look down with scorn upon the complacent co-operators in a movement in which any independent conviction is punished by exclusion from the Party or with banishment to Siberia.

Owing to the ultimatum of the S.D. Section, we had managed to restrain the Berlin Workers' Union for a day. The Party leaders were well informed about the spirit prevailing in the factories. Even after the ultimatum the attempt was made to gain a few more hours by a broadsheet, in which the assent of the Government was referred to and attention drawn to the danger of compromising the Armistice if we should withdraw from the Government before its settlement. The workers should wait a few hours longer, and then it was to be hoped the Kaiser crisis would be over. From Prince Max's account one gets the impression of his having regarded the S.P.D. as a kind of regiment that could, or at any rate should, wheel into line at the word of its commanding officer: "I learn that Ebert has extended the time limit till Saturday (9th November) and has issued a proclamation to the work-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

ers." What a wonderful thing the Social Democratic Party must have seemed in the eyes of Prince Max, General Ludendorff and others!

The Eve of 9th November

The S. D. shop stewards from the Berlin factories attended in large numbers in the hall of the Executive in the Lindenstrasse. They reported on the feeling in the factories. The movement could not be checked; the disappointment of the workers was too great. If the S.P.D. opposed the movement they would be simply overwhelmed. Let no one think for a moment that we were not going to do what was necessary to ward off the inevitable. We would keep our heads till the end. The broadsheet was mentioned; it had not had much effect. There were many speeches. Their general trend was that we could not hold up the course of things. One said: "The workmen will come to the factories to-morrow morning, but will march off again at once." Another said: "The utmost we could do would be to keep them inside the factories till breakfast time." A third declared: "We can decide here what we like; to-morrow morning depends on a word, a chance. To keep back the men is impossible."

I had to tell them at some length how the Cabinet, and especially the Chancellor, had behaved in recent days. I made those gentlemen out to be better than they deserved. The Equal Franchise for Prussia and all Federal States was guaranteed absolutely. The reform of the Prussian Government was in hand. More Socialists were to join the Government. The most painful thing was the Kaiser problem. Here I did not mince my words, but truthfully showed up the procrastinating policy of Prince Max and his friends in and outside the Cabinet. "Now, after they have burnt their fingers,

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

they are at last going for the Kaiser. They go on hoping from hour to hour. After having let them delay for days and weeks, do not let us refuse them the one-hour limit. Believe me, I think as you do—I should like to take action at once, that is what I feel like. But do not forget what a grave responsibility we have; we dare not act irresponsibly, like the Spartacists and Communist twaddlers, who are never so pleased as when everything is at sixes and sevens. We intend to press forward our demands at all costs, but we must not endanger the negotiations on the Armistice. We will not therefore haggle about an hour, and will give the Government a respite till nine o'clock to-morrow morning. Do those who intend parading the streets under any circumstances know what consequences this may have? We all know how such things start. No one knows how it will end. And think of the blood that has been shed for the last four years! Are the streets of Berlin to run red with the blood of working-men? I know you are all agreed with me when I say how keenly we desire to get what we can, provided that no drop of blood is shed in getting it. We will and must do everything to avoid bloodshed. If marching orders are given for 7 or 9 A.M. and a general strike is declared, it is an immensely important matter for us. Think less of these irresponsible ranters in the factories, and more of your families and Germany! It may be that by nine o'clock we shall have got all we can get—the Armistice and the Kaiser's abdication. But it may be that by nine o'clock hundreds will be weltering in their blood if we refuse the desired truce and march out at seven o'clock. And not one of you knows how the soldiers will behave in this decisive hour. In two hours' time there may be no to-morrow for any of us. From seven to eight lots of things may happen—support our proposals."

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

9th November

On the eve of 9th November no one had any sleep. To me it seemed as if it would never end. Though I went to bed very late I was up at six prepared to march. I talked over things with my wife. After enjoying an "indefinable German tea" and dry bread, I rang up the Imperial Chancery—it was hardly seven o'clock. Was the Kaiser gone? "Not yet, but we expect to hear at any moment." "I will wait another hour; if he has not gone, then I will."

I drove off immediately to the Reichstag and rang up the Chancery once more. Things were already getting lively there. All sorts of shady people were parading the corridors. About nine I again rang up the Chancery. Not yet—perhaps at twelve. "I do not want as long as that to make up my mind. Please tell the Chancellor I resign. In a quarter of an hour you shall have the announcement of my resignation in writing. . . ." I must not be in too great a hurry! But surely one cannot go on waiting till it is too late!

An express messenger brought my letter of resignation for the Chancellor to the Wilhelmstrasse: "I beg to announce that I hereby resign my appointment as Secretary of State." The Cabinet was already assembled. Konrad Haussmann wrote in the *Berliner Tageblatt* on 21st November, 1920:

"On 9th November at nine o'clock A.M. the War Cabinet was informed that Scheidemann, Secretary of State, had resigned. The meeting of the Cabinet was adjourned till twelve. . . ."

Now I was a free man again: free, after seeing for four weeks day by day how far human incapacity, unreliability and indecision could go. In the Section's committee-room many members of the Reichstag had turned up before nine,

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

as well as members of the Section and Executive, the Heads of the Berlin Association, and a sub-committee of the Berlin Trade Council. News came to hand of a conflicting character. At one barrack fighting had occurred between workingmen and soldiers; from others it was stated that the soldiers had gone over to the workers, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. In many papers heroic deeds were described, reminding one of the stories about the brave soldier Schwejk. Perhaps they would serve as preliminary sketches for future revolutionary pictures to delight our grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They had no historical importance. It would be wrong to belittle the work of any man in the service of the revolutionary movement, but any attempt to exaggerate the work of individuals at the cost of others is foolish.

When the consultations of the S.D. officials began in the Reichstag, the General Strike had already started. Enormous crowds were marching to the centre of the town. Whole regiments—*e.g.* the “absolutely reliable Jägers”—troops from the Alexander barracks, as well as armoured cars, so indispensable for any revolutionary movement: these had been placed at the disposal of the S.D. Party. About noon General von Linsingen, in command, issued a proclamation against the use of firearms. The S.D. Executive and the Section had agreed at a meeting to combine at once with the Independents. We only came across Vogtherr and Dittmann, who without Ledebour were not prepared to negotiate and were not authorized to do so. Ledebour was still asleep, for, according to his time-table, the Revolution would not start till 11th November, after it had been postponed for a week on the 4th. Thus he had really slept through it all. When he did at last put in an appearance he was in a furious temper, and bit-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

terly inveighed against his friend Dittmann because he, Dittmann, had made a kindly remark to us, "that you would not have made had you been present at the meeting on such and such a date." The Independents were without a leader, for Haase had not yet returned from Kiel. We proposed to them that they should take over the Government in conjunction with us. Ledebour only acknowledged the offer, to the dismay of his two friends. At our private meeting his noticeable conversation with the Independents was at once reported. Ebert said:

"The Independents have not definitely consented. They maintain that their Executive is not fully represented. Negotiations must be at once opened with the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, and the Government asked to give us full powers. If they refuse, further action must be taken."

The Independents, who had given us fair words up to twelve noon, could not keep their promise because they were hopelessly divided. Ebert being engaged elsewhere, I made all sorts of arrangements. I have to laugh heartily over many of them to-day. To begin with I issued passes wholesale. Then I appointed assistants for various duties—a man for this job and another for that. On the stairs of the Reichstag leading from the top floor to the first I came across my colleague Göhre while I was being mobbed by others, asking me to give up one of our Committee men to help the Minister of War who should keep his eyes open and see that no mischief was done against us. "Hallo, Göhre! This is a lucky meeting. You're a lieutenant. Go at once to the War Office, where you must control everything that comes out of it and counter-sign anything important." Göhre: "I'm quite ready, but for a job like that it were better for me to put on my uniform."—"Good, put on your uniform." Max Cohen, member of the

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

Reichstag, who in the War had been toggled up as a soldier for a few days like Konrad Hänisch and discharged as unfit, came up and remarked that he had a uniform too. "Good, go home and put it on." Two hours later both Göhre and Cohen, who lived on the Wahnsee line, appeared in regimentals. Göhre was very much put out; somebody in the street had torn off his shoulder-straps.

Let us take a look inside the Wilhelmstrasse, where one comforting message after another was delivered to the Chancellor. He still clung to foolish hopes. While they were wiring to the Kaiser telling him to resign, something quite different might occur. Many hundred thousands of Berlin artisans were already parading the centre of Berlin, to whom the Kaiser's abdication was now no longer an important question; they wanted more than this. On the top of this came the startling news that knocked the bottom out of all our hopes. The Naumburg Jägers had joined the insurgents—but the Prince, even with one foot in the grave, hoisted the flag of hope. He hoped on from hour to hour. He was personally telephoning and telegraphing to Spa without intermission. The replies were always the same: "We must wait a bit," and such like. After eleven o'clock more definite news came to hand. The Prince had received authentic news by telephone:

"The matter is now practically settled; they are now drawing it up. The Kaiser has decided to abdicate. We should get the thing signed and sealed in half an hour."

The Prince was conferring with Simons. His idea of the previous day seemed the right one: "Ebert is the only possible Chancellor in this fix. I said to myself: The Revolution is on the eve of success; we can't smash it, but perhaps we can throttle it. Now then, out with the Kaiser's abdication, Ebert's

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

appointment, and the invitation to the people to settle its own form of Government by the constitutional National Assembly. If Ebert is introduced to me as the tribune of the people, then we shall have a republic; if it's Liebknecht, Bolshevism; but if the abdicating Kaiser appoints Ebert Chancellor, there is a faint hope still for the monarchy. . . ."

Dr. Simons had repeatedly told the Chancellor and written to him saying: "I knew that Ebert was no thoroughgoing opponent of the monarchy!"

Meanwhile let us take a glimpse at the General Headquarters at Spa. The telephone bell to Berlin is ringing unceasingly. "It is getting quite unbearable; let's hang up the receiver. The fuss these Berlin gentlemen are making is downright sickening." "Retirement—ah! His Majesty—it's true!" Wild excitement. General Groener and Major-General von Plessen utterly non-plussed by a phone message! They shriek into their ears, "For God's sake do get the Kaiser to go at once; otherwise the game is up." The soldiers are joining the rioters. Groener and Plessen refuse; they're too loyal to tell him to go. A car dashes up at full speed. The Crown Prince jumps out and rushes through the garden of the Villa Farnaise at Spa, where the Kaiser is stopping. "Now then, out with it—haven't you yet shot those Kiel sailors? . . ."

Fifty generals from the front have been sent for; thirty-nine have turned up. Nineteen have had engine trouble—another proof of our rotten machinery! But still there are thirty-nine of them—from the front—of sorts. They are now under cross-examination.

A. Will the Army follow the Emperor in Civil War? One says yes; fifteen cannot say exactly; twenty-three say no outright.

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

B. What does the Army think of Bolshevism? Will the soldiers march against the enemy at home? Eight generals are doubtful; twelve say, if their families are in danger, they may; nineteen say no.

The last half-hour the Spa people had wrangled out of the Chancellor had expired without any news of the Emperor's abdication. Now Prince Max and Simons ("except to Simons I never said a word about my intention") were considering whether they should not simply announce it before it had actually occurred! Dr. Simons had advised the Prince to do this. All formalities were now to be dispensed with.

Though the Chancellor is always speaking of Ebert, he tells us nothing of a private conversation he had with him in the forenoon of 9th November. The Rev. Dr. Felden, Ebert's admirer and the author of the Ebert book, "A Man's Way" ("Eines Menschen Weg," Friesenverlag, Bremen), relies unmistakably upon information given him by Ebert's bosom friends, but more especially on the facts given him by the family of our dead comrade. In his book Felden mentions what has never before been stated:

"On 9th November Prince Max of Baden asks him for an interview—to be strictly private. The Chancellor sees he can do nothing more—let alone save anything. He entreats Ebert to take the Chancellorship out of his hands. He's the right man to lead the people of Germany through the stormy sea. Ebert refuses. What! this job—now? This colossal responsibility? To take a burden on his shoulders like this! It's too heavy for any man. Prince Max persists in his entreaties. He tells him how enormously important it would be from a political point of view if he took on the Government that he

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

had duly received from the hand of the chief representative. For the country's sake he should shoulder the burden—he was the man to bear it. 'I've proved you to be a man of pure intentions, who is convinced that Germany can only fulfil her international obligations if her people are united.' He had therefore chosen him to perform the hardest task that could be expected from any man. Ebert thereupon accepted. He knew that his own life was the sacrifice. At dinner-time, on 9th November the deputation, appointed by the responsible authorities, went off to the Chancellor—Otto Braun, Scheidemann and Brolat and Heller, the chiefs of the Berlin Trades Department. Not one of us knew anything of Ebert's previous conversation with Prince Max."

When I now call back to mind the course of the conversation, and read through Felden's account and my own notes, the whole affair seems unnecessary—not to say undignified, provided, of course, that Felden's account of this private interview is true. Everything at this interview that was subsequently discussed at our official meeting had been long ago settled, but it may have been that the Prince desired that the transference of his office to another should be witnessed by a larger body of witnesses, according to some absurd constitutional precedent. The Prince, when he relies on his memory, is not very trustworthy; for instance, he says that Heinrich Schulz was one of the S.D. deputation. Heinrich Schulz was not a member of the deputation, but Otto Braun was, and the Prince does not mention him.

The Prince thus describes his meeting with our deputation:

"Ebert began, 'In order that law and order may be maintained, the members of our Party have instructed us to inform the Chancellor that we, to avoid bloodshed, consider it absolutely necessary that the Government should pass into the

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

hands of men who possess the full confidence of the people. We consider it imperative that the office of Chancellor and the Supreme Military Command of the Mark should be filled by responsible men of our own Party. . . .’”

What Ebert is said to have told the Chancellor, no member of the deputation raising any objection to anything Ebert really said, would have been naturally understandable. The Prince’s remarks have, however, increased importance in view of the previous conversation that none of us knew about. The workers and the Unions only thought it expedient for them to say to the Government that its hour had struck and they would take over control.

That my recollection was correct was confirmed by the still-surviving members of the deputation, Braun, the Prime Minister and Director Brolat. Felden, who very clearly describes the private interview and has put the Prince’s appreciative remarks on Ebert in inverted commas, attaches hardly any importance to the official meeting with the deputation. “A telephone message came from the Imperial Chancery—Ebert, Scheidemann and Braun, to come at once. Prince Max of Baden appointed Ebert in due form as Chancellor.” Felden barely writes four lines on the report. I have often been obliged in course of years to talk and write about the meeting of the deputation with Prince Max. How little the words Prince Max quotes about the meeting mattered to me is apparent from the fact that I never mentioned them. On the other hand, I remember distinctly how Prince Max, after his truthful remark about Social Democracy being cock of the walk, asked Ebert, in our presence, whether he was prepared to take over the Chancellorship.

“If anyone is able to save our Fatherland from disaster at this moment it is your Party. You have the widest organiza-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

tion and the greatest influence. Herr Ebert, take over the office of Chancellor." Ebert had doubts as to whether he should not first consult the Party. Braun and I chimed in together: "Nonsense! just say yes."

This question of Ebert's to us, his Party comrades, as to whether he should not ask the Party before acceptance—a question Braun and I answered very distinctly—makes me still doubt the previous private talk with the Prince. Fr. W. Nowack says this in his book, "Chaos" (Munich, "Verlag für Kultur-Politik"), about Ebert's being given the Chancellorship:

"Prince Max had already nominated the Reichstag member, Fritz Ebert, to the Kaiser as his successor. Then he turned to the speaker and asked him whether he had been chosen by his Party to undertake the office. The Reichstag member stated it was the wish of the Party. The question was then asked whether he accepted office by virtue of the Constitution of the Empire. 'According to the form of the Constitution of the Empire,' answered Ebert. It did not seem clear to those present whether the traditional form under the monarchy was to be maintained or not. The M.P. referred to all the troops having gone over to the movement. Haussmann, the Secretary of State, asked for evidence for the statement. Scheidemann, ex-Secretary of State, invited the Prince and the members of the Cabinet to take a motor trip round the barracks and see for themselves—under the protection of the Red Flag. . . . I have stated already that the 'transference' of the Chancellorship was a bit of constitutional humbug. The words 'according to the form of the Constitution' in Nowak's book are quite as constitutional as the 'transference.' The Prince goes on to remark:

"I told Ebert: I have already proposed to the Kaiser to lay a bill before Parliament that will place the elections under the

LUDENDORFF CRIES OUT FOR AN ARMISTICE

control of a constitutional National Assembly. This Assembly will then decide how Germany is to be ruled in future.'

"Ebert: 'We may say we're agreed on the idea of this National Assembly.'"

How odd all this must seem to many people! We have been fighting for weeks over the Emperor's abdication. The Chancellor, who had determined to put no pressure on the Kaiser, had announced his abdication and the Crown Prince's renunciation of the Throne before either had decided to say yes or no. The soldiers had long since gone over to the revolutionaries. The Chancellor had handed over his office *de facto* to one of the revolutionary leaders, yet, in spite of all, told Ebert that he had informed the Kaiser about the National Assembly, that was to settle Germany's future—a monarchy or republic. What in the devil's name had the Chancellor's words, who was already out of office, to do with the Kaiser? To my mind, Kaiser and monarchy were already done for. Ebert's view was different, as we shall soon see.

No Shooting. The End of the Monarchy

About 12 P.M. on 9th November—almost simultaneously with the news that the Kaiser and Crown Prince had "abdicated," it was officially announced that all use of firearms was prohibited. The day before the Commander-in-Chief, General von Linsingen, had strictly and finally prohibited the Revolution. Woe on the heads of all who were organizing Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. Stuff and nonsense, like much else in these days. In the proclamation of the Kaiser's and the Crown Prince's renunciation of the Throne that had anticipated events, the Chancellor's intentions were said to be:

"To propose to the Regent (?) the appointment of Ebert, Member of the Reichstag, to the Chancellorship, and the lay-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

ing of a Bill before Parliament, pending the General Election, for the formation of a German legislative National Assembly, whose duty it will be to settle finally the future form of Government for the German people, including those communities which might desire to enter the German Empire.

Ebert—Chancellor for One Day

Ebert stopped behind in the Chancery, and we others hurried off to the Reichstag, where our friends were assembled. I reported shortly on the events of the forenoon. The assembly approved of the proposal to issue at once a warning not to endanger the food supplies of the population. The inhabitants generally should stand solid behind the S.P.D.

Ebert was meeting at this time a deputation of the Independents, among whom were Dr. Oskar Cohn, Vogtherr and Dittmann—von Payer, as Prince Max says, was, at Ebert's request, brought in for consultation. This seems quite probable, for otherwise the Prince could hardly have reported this discussion. Here is his account:

"Ebert told the gentlemen in rather a blunt and rather superior way of the S.D. Party's decision to take over the Government. As Chancellor, he invited the Independents to say whether they would enter the Government and what their opinion would be if other Parties were asked to join it. The gentlemen in a 'hushed' voice pointed out that they could not make any reply without consulting their friends, but did not decline on principle."

VII

THE REPUBLIC PROCLAIMED

ON the morning of 9th November, 1918, the Reichstag was like an armed camp. Working men and soldiers were going in and out. Many bore arms. With Ebert, who had come from the Chancery to the Reichstag, and other friends, I sat hungry in the dining-hall. Thin, watery soup was the only thing to be had. . . . Then a crowd of workers and soldiers rushed into the hall and made straight for our table.

Fifty of them yelled out at the same time, "Scheidemann, come along with us at once. Philip, you must come out and speak."

I refused; how many times had I not already spoken!

"You must, you must, if trouble is to be avoided. There are thousands upon thousands outside shouting for you to speak. Come along, quick, Scheidemann! Liebknecht is already speaking from the balcony of the Schloss."

"Well, if I must."

"Come along now. You must."

Dozens urged it upon me, till I went off with them.

The main lobby presented a dramatic spectacle. Guns were piled up in stacks. From the courtyard the trampling and neighing of horses could be heard. In the hall thousands of hustling men seemed to be talking and shouting at the same time. We hurried away towards the reading-room. I intended to speak to the crowd from a window.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Those with me, right and left, pressed me to look at what was going on in the street. Between the Schloss and the Reichstag, so they said, masses of people were moving up and down.

"Liebknecht intends to proclaim the Soviet Republic!"

Now I clearly saw what was afoot. I knew his slogan—supreme authority for the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. Germany to be therefore a Russian province, a branch of the Soviet? No, no, a thousand times no!

There was no doubt at all. The man who could bring along the "Bolshies" from the Schloss to the Reichstag or the Social Democrats from the Reichstag to the Schloss had won the day.

I saw the Russian folly staring me in the face—the Bolshevik tyranny, the substitute for the tyranny of the Czars! No, no, Germany should not have that on the top of all her other miseries.

I was already standing at the window. Many thousands of poor folk were trying to wave their hats and caps. The shouts of the crowds sounded like a mighty chorus. Then there was silence. I only said a few words, which were received with tremendous cheering.

"Workers and soldiers, frightful were those four years of war, ghastly the sacrifices the people made in blood and treasure. The cursed War is at an end. Murder has ceased. The fruits of war, want and misery, will burden us for years. The catastrophe we tried our best to avoid has not been spared us, because our proposals for peace by consent were rejected and we ourselves scorned and despised. The foes of an industrious people, the real foes in our midst, that have caused Germany's downfall, are silent and invisible. These were the warriors who stopped at home, promoting their demands for annexation, bitterly opposing any reform of the Constitution,



SCHEIDEMANN, ON NOVEMBER 9, 1918, ANNOUNCES THE REPUBLIC
FROM THE BUILDING OF THE REICHSTAG

THE REPUBLIC PROCLAIMED

and especially supporting the scandalous electoral system of Prussia. These foes are, it is to be hoped, gone for good. The Emperor has abdicated. He and his friends have decamped. The people have triumphed over them all along the line. Prince Max of Baden has handed over his office as Chancellor to Ebert. Our friend will form a Labour Government to which all Socialist Parties will belong. The new Government must not be hampered in their work for peace or their efforts for supplying food and work.

“Workmen and soldiers realize the historic importance of to-day. Miracles have happened. Long and incessant toil is before us. Everything for the people; everything by the people! Nothing must be done that brings dishonour to the Labour movement. Stand united and loyal, and be conscious of your duty. The old and the rotten—the monarchy—has broken down. Long live the new! Long live the German Republic!”

Endless cheering broke out. Then the crowds began to move towards the Schloss. The Bolshevik wave that threatened to engulf Germany had spent its force. The German Republic had become a thing of life in the brains and heart of the masses.

Five Minutes Later

Directly after my speech I went back to the dining-hall of the Reichstag to rescue my “skilly.” The scene that then took place I have never mentioned, and would have left unmentioned now had not the Rev. Felden described it in his book. A few working men and soldiers, who had come with me into the hall that was now only partially full, were all agog to speak with Prince Max, and bawled into the hall: “Scheidemann has proclaimed the Republic.” Let us see what Felden,

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

who can only have been informed by Ebert or one of his intimate friends, writes on the subject:

"Ebert is horrified and calls out to his friend: 'This is all wrong. The Constituent Assembly must settle the future form of Government.'"

Things did not pass off so quietly and amicably as that. Ebert's face turned livid with wrath when he heard what I had done. He banged his fist on the table and yelled at me, "Is it true?" On my replying it was not only true but a matter of course, he made a scene which passed my understanding. "You have no right to proclaim the Republic. What becomes of Germany—whether she becomes a republic or something else—a Constituent Assembly must decide." How could so wise a man judge so grossly the signs of the times as to talk on 9th November of a regency, a substitute, an administrator for the Empire, and such old monarchist rubbish that had been totally scrapped! Now, many years after this critical day, I understand Ebert's conduct better, for now we have various books and reports, from which it can be gathered that these private conversations about monarchy, republic, a substitute for the Kaiser, about which I knew nothing, actually took place. Ebert to a certain extent was not a free agent. Social Democrats and myself were not thus hampered.

Prince Max says that he was urgently requested by Ebert between five and six to remain in Berlin. On the Prince's asking him why, Ebert answered, "I should like you to remain as an administrator of the Empire." Prince Max as an Imperial administrator! Who could fail to think of the resolution of the National Assembly of 1848, about abstaining from using revolutionary power and electing an Imperial administrator? Archduke Johann was then chosen, and this time he was to be a Prince of Baden! It seems to me that Prince Max

THE REPUBLIC PROCLAIMED

rightly summed the situation up by asking me for a passport for home, sweet home, on the evening of 9th November, 1918. In a very thorough and comprehensive review of the Prince's book which he printed in the ninth number of the *Gesellschaft*, 1927, Hermann Müller says that Ebert had never spoken of this incident to anyone else as far as he knew. He could not contradict the Prince's account, but assumed that Ebert made this proposal because Konrad Haussmann urged him to. The Prince, Hermann Müller goes on to say, was impossible anywhere. Ebert's offer, therefore, may have been only an act of exaggerated politeness. After my experiences in those critical days I am quite as unable as Müller to contradict the Prince's statement.

On my inquiring by letter as to his facts about Ebert's interviews with Prince Max, Felden assured me that his source of information was undeniable. Felden, who as a friend of Ebert's and a highly respected clergyman, most certainly did not make unfounded statements, convinced me of the accuracy of his facts about Ebert's last holiday before the outbreak of war. His description was based on authentic information. "Ebert simply would not believe in war."

How differently the situation was regarded even on 9th November, is clear from the following data: When I declared the Republic, I spoke in my short address of a Labour movement, and said previously, "Ebert will form a Government to which all Socialist Parties will belong." This I thought obvious. When the proclamation, the first signed "Chancellor Ebert," appeared, it ran, "The former Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, has handed over to me the office of Imperial Chancellor with the consent of all the Secretaries of State. I am about to form a new Government in agreement with the Parties. . . ."

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

This first proclamation was doubtless drawn up by a member of the *ancien régime* without consulting any Social Democrat. The last Chancellor handed over to our colleague the office of Chancellor just as His Majesty the Kaiser once handed over to me the office of a Secretary of State; hence the appointment of Ebert through Prince Max with the consent of the Secretaries of State. Not to make this revolutionary incident more grotesque, I will not enumerate all the Secretaries of State down to the arch-reactionary Conservative, Herr von Waldow. That the proclamation of the Republic was not in accordance with such remarkable constitutional opinions and precedents is sufficiently plain. Moreover, Ebert corrected his erroneous view of the situation over-night, as tactics were his special gift. The *Vorwärts* of 11th November reported an interview Ebert granted to a representative of the *Hollandsch Nieuws Büro*: "Germany has completed her Revolution. . . . The most skeptical will not fail to see that monarchism and imperialism are now finally dead in Germany." However satisfied I was with the concluding sentence, I could by no means agree with the first.

No Cessation of Hostilities

In the morning papers on 9th November official information, dated the day before, was given about the armistice negotiations: "Instructions re armistice negotiations have been communicated to our representatives. Their acceptance *in toto* is required on Monday, 11th November, *i.e.* within seventy-two hours. The German proposal for an immediate preliminary pause in hostilities was rejected by Marshal Foch." *Note.*—This happened in the reign of the ex-Kaiser and his Prince Chancellor. On inquiry by the Armistice Commission of the Supreme Command as to whether the cruel terms

THE REPUBLIC PROCLAIMED

should be accepted or rejected, General Field-Marshal von Hindenburg wired:

"The attempt must be made to moderate this and that condition." But he goes on to say: "If it does not succeed, the matter must be brought to a conclusion willy nilly. . . . As to points 1, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 a violent protest must be made to Wilson. Please carry out the Government's resolution with all despatch.

"VON HINDENBURG."

The petitions to Wilson for an armistice were made by the late Imperial Government owing to the despairing entreaties of the Supreme Command. The signing of the Armistice followed on Hindenburg's telegram.

After Ebert had accepted the Chancellorship from the hands of Prince Max, he had naturally to take steps for the formation by Monday morning of a Government which could sign the armistice terms, because, if not, the enemy armies would have broken through into Germany. Any serious resistance by German troops was out of the question.

Solid as the S.P.D. stood at once behind Ebert, everything was all at sixes and sevens among the Independents. Haase, the brains of that Party, was absent. We got quickly and perfectly together. The Government was to select three members from each faction—the S.P.D. and U.S.P.D. (the German Independent Socialist Party). To guide the special extra Ministers, the acting Secretaries of State were asked to carry on. With Ebert, Landsberg and I were to enter the acting Cabinet. I warned the Independents continually that the time was getting short. They put me off from hour to hour. When they were still talking on the evening of 9th November—it was not

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

surprising, as Liebknecht and Ledebour called the tune—I went to their committee-room with Brolat and Heller, the two working-men. A few members of the I.S.P. had previously expressed to me their dissatisfaction at their Section's conduct. Breitscheid agreed unconditionally to our proposal of forming a Government together and summoning the National Assembly as soon as practicable. On entering the committee-room, a sorry spectacle met our eyes. Almost all present were talking excitedly and gesticulating. Besides members, many strangers were there. Obviously there had been most violent disputes in which, as our further talk showed, the "Radicals" had won the day. Liebknecht was the chief attraction, and was to be the only member to talk things over with us. He was ready to join with us in a Government for three days with this proviso: "All legislative, executive and administrative power was to be vested in the hands of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils." Other similar intelligent conditions did not occur to him at the moment. Liebknecht seemed to me utterly ridiculous. I could not in the least understand the Independents in this matter. They answered my question how it was that Liebknecht should do all the talking when he was not even a member of the I.S.P., by saying, "He is now a member of us." Edward Bernstein, then a member of the I.S.P., was present at this meeting. He describes it in his book on the German Revolution ("Verlag für Geschichte und Erziehung," Berlin). He says of Liebknecht: "In the afternoon, at the head of his supporters, he had hoisted the red flag on the Berliner Schloss and delivered a revolutionary speech to a dense crowd assembled underneath, that was received with jubilant applause and endless cheers." In a footnote Bernstein adds: "In spite of the considerable differences of opinion between us, I had much sympathy for Karl Liebknecht. But

THE REPUBLIC PROCLAIMED

when he set about prescribing Bolshevism for the Party in the way described, the thought flashed through my brain that he was starting a counter-revolution." Of me Bernstein says that I talked in almost a fatherly way. Liebknecht's speech from the window of the Schloss, to which he alludes, was probably the same which I prematurely put an end to by my speech in the Reichstag.

A Basis for the S.P. and I.S.P.

In the S.D. Section I at once reported my experiences with the Independents, omitted nothing, but advised patience, which was really no easy matter for me. Meanwhile, as the demands of the Independents were at last put on paper and communicated to us, we answered forthwith. From our reply it will be clear what was required of us.

"With the sincere desire of reaching an agreement, we must make our position clear with regard to your terms: You demand:

"1. Germany is to be a Social Republic.

"This demand is the objective of our special policy; the people, however, has to decide on this through the Constituent Assembly.

"2. In this Republic the whole of executive, legislative and jurisdictional authority shall be placed solely in the hands of responsible individuals elected by the whole working population and soldiers.

"If by this proposal the dictatorship of one part of the class is meant, behind which there is no popular majority, we must reject this condition, because it is contrary to our democratic principles.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

"3. Exclusion of all bourgeois members from the Government.

"We must reject this condition, because its fulfilment would considerably jeopardize, if not make impossible, the feeding of the people.

"4. The co-operation of the Independents is in force only for three days as a provisional measure in order to form a Government capable of carrying out the Armistice.

"We consider the co-operation of the Socialist Parties to be necessary, at any rate till the meeting of the Constituent Assembly.

"5. Departmental Ministers are only to be regarded as technical advisers of the Cabinet itself, whose word is final.

"We approve of this condition.

"6. Equal powers to be granted to the two heads of the Cabinet.

"We are in favour of all members of the Cabinet having equal rights; the Constituent Assembly has to decide on this."

Reason finally prevailed among the Independents, and Liebknecht was beaten. Next morning, a Sunday, a deputation brought us the following answer:

"The Independent Socialist Party is prepared, with a view to consolidating what the Socialists have gained in the Revolution, to enter the Cabinet under the following conditions:

"The Cabinet may only consist of Social Democrats, who, as People's Commissaries, have equal powers one with another.

"This limitation does not apply to departmental Ministers; they are only advisers to the Cabinet, whose word is final.

THE REPUBLIC PROCLAIMED

Two members of the Social Democratic Parties with equal rights are given to each of these Ministers, one from each Party.

"A time limit is not imposed on the entry of Social Democrats into the Cabinet, to which each Party sends three members.

"The political power lies in the hands of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, that are to be summoned at once to a popular assembly from the whole Empire.

"The question of the Constituent Assembly will only take effect after the consolidation of what has been acquired by the Revolution, and should be reserved for later discussion.

"In case these terms are accepted, which are dictated by the wishes of a select committee of the proletariat, we have appointed our members, Haase, Dittmann and Barth, as delegates to the Cabinet."

Great difficulties were overcome by this move. We gave our assent, especially in view of the terrible condition of our country. Before a popular meeting, convened by the Workers' and Soldiers' Council and attended by more than 3,000 workers and soldiers, had been held in the Circus Busch and given their assent to the Government of Ebert—Haase—Scheidemann—Landsberg—Dittmann—Barth—it was already in action, and ready to sign the terms of the Armistice in accordance with Hindenburg's request. Further slaughter had been put an end to.

9th November at General Headquarters

Before saying more of the work of the People's Representatives, we will have a look at Main Headquarters. Colonel Bauer, so often mentioned, Ludendorff's lieutenant and close friend, described in his book, "Der Grosse Krieg in Feld und

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Heimat" (Tübingen, Osiandersche Buchhandlung), very fully what happened at Headquarters on 9th November. The General Field-Marshal von Hindenburg had given a very gloomy account of things at home; this had had a most discouraging effect on the superior officers who had met to consider the general feeling in the Army. Bauer attacks General Groener, who had given the Kaiser a bit of his mind, in a far worse way. The only men who had stood by the Kaiser were the Crown Prince, Schulenburg and Plessen. Bauer then waxed wroth: "Where were the five hundred officers attached to Headquarters? They made no effort; they were surely disgruntled with the Supreme Command. But had they been summoned they would have moved, and they alone were in a position to protect the Kaiser."

Events at G.H.Q. on 9th November would be incompletely stated if we left out the fact that, according to Bauer, "officers of the Supreme Command turned up in motor cars, flying red flags." He says further: "Soldiers' Councils arrived in the evening from home to see what was going on. They saw nothing but defeat before them, and now the scene was changed; they took up the reins trailing on the ground and—muddled everything. The officers looked on complacently and the words 'You must go to school again' were heard. The Field-Marshal, to whom the Kaiser had given charge of the Army with instructions to lead it home behind the Rhine, placed himself at Ebert's disposal in the new interim Government."

Colonel Bauer probably could not have more clearly described the Government now joined by Hindenburg. It was not the Government handed over to Ebert as Chancellor by Prince Max; it was rather a council of people's representatives, to which the Independents, including Barth, belonged. In-

THE REPUBLIC PROCLAIMED

cidentally the Supreme Command had fully recognized and admirably "hoodwinked" the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils by giving them their patronage (according to Bauer). A request had even come from Cologne for a Workers' and Soldiers' Council to be established at Headquarters. Sollmann, later a member of the Reichstag, had taken over the job and done it thoroughly.

VIII

THE PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

FORTY-EIGHT hours had not elapsed after the six People's Representatives had taken over the business of the Government before they published the following proclamation:

"TO THE GERMAN PEOPLE!

"The Government created by the Revolution, the policy of which is purely Socialistic, is setting itself the task of carrying out the Socialistic programme. With the full force of the law it now promulgates the following:

"1. The 'state of siege' is suspended.

"2. The right of assembly and association is unrestricted, both for officials and State employees.

"3. The censorship does not exist. The censorship of plays is abolished.

"4. Freedom of speech and of the press is re-established.

"5. Religious freedom is guaranteed. No one shall be forced into any creed.

"6. Amnesty is granted for all political offences. Sentences pending for such offences are quashed.

"7. The Law of National Service is abolished, with the exception of those regulations relating to keeping the peace.

"8. All regulations as to domestic servants have expired; also any special laws against agricultural labourers.

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

"9. The regulations on the Insurance of Workers, in abeyance since the beginning of the War, are again in force.

"Furthermore, ordinances, social and political, will be published shortly. The Eight Hours Bill will come into force on 1st January, 1919, at latest. The Government will do its utmost to provide work. An ordinance to help the unemployed has been settled. The cost will be defrayed equally by the Empire, State and community. In insurance against sickness the liability will exceed the present sum of 2,500 marks. Scarcity of houses will be remedied by building houses. A scheme for a regular food supply will be prepared. The Government will maintain regular production, protect property against robbery by private persons, and guarantee the freedom and safety of the person.

"All elections to public bodies are henceforward to be conducted according to equal, secret, direct and universal suffrage, based on proportional representation, for all males and females from twenty years old. This electoral law applies to elections for the Constituent Assembly, concerning which further instructions will follow.

"EBERT, HAASE, SCHEIDEMANN, LANDSBERG, DITTMANN, BARTH.

"Berlin,

"12th November, 1918."

What was decreed in this short proclamation would have taken many years to bring about in ordinary circumstances in Germany. Many Germans have unfortunately forgotten how we really stood right up to the end of the War. The Prussian Government was to have the same number of members as the Reichstag. One of its first declarations was as follows:

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

"Attention is drawn to the fact that the existing laws and ordinances, except those expressly abolished by the Government, are still in force and are to be observed by everyone, and everyone is also to be left in undisturbed possession of his rights and privileges. Accordingly all Prussians are required to pay as usual the rates and taxes previously in force.

"In the name of the Prussian Government:

"DR. BREITSCHEID. DR. SUDEKUM.

"*Berlin,*

"*14th November, 1918.*"

All the People's Representatives went to work with the best intentions. Unfortunately the first days disclosed that between the Independents and ourselves a great and almost unbridgeable gulf was fixed. Whereas we Social Democrats were perfectly united, with clear objectives before us, it was the reverse with the Independents. They had no solid Party behind them. From the first day Liebknecht and Ledebour made things very unpleasant for them. They had had to take the ultra-Radical, Emil Barth, into the Cabinet. It would have been quite possible to work with Haase and Dittmann had it not been necessary to prod up Barth at every moment and bring him over to their opinion. Hence it came about that the three Independents paid more attention to the crowds in the streets, nine-tenths of whom were politically and industrially unskilled, than was expedient for the Government and the needs of the new Republic. Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg addressed the Spartacists and the meetings of the "Deserters" in wild speeches against Scheidemann's "men," and preached Bolshevism pure and simple. A few days after 9th November Spartacus severed his connection with the I.S.P. Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg now let off their steam in the *Red Flag*.

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

The result was soon seen. Wild gangs of excited workmen and soldiers incessantly invaded the Chancery and by their uproar hindered the People's Representatives from doing their urgent duties. The People's Representatives had ordered the workers and soldiers to leave the streets and give up their arms. Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in the *Red Flag* told them to do nothing of the kind. The consequence was that Berlin's streets were once again stained with the workers' blood.

A Sea of Trouble

Machine-guns rattled day and night in the Wilhelmstrasse. Gradually we got used to them. On noticing that the bullets could hit our ceilings but not our beds, we went to "rest" in the rooms looking on the Wilhelmstrasse. Sleep was out of the question. Deputations, holding hand grenades under our noses when they stated their wants, excited us in the end just as little as did Liebknecht's wild threats. Another worry lay heavily upon us: should we manage to hold the Reich together? We must manage, cost what it might! We had bad news about the "Rheinbund," the "Palatinate Republic," the "Nordische Republic," Independent Bavaria, joined to the Tyrol but separated from the Empire! Osel of the Centre had not only proposed this to Eisner, but had also put the question whether Bavaria should not ask France for a separate peace. The part the Bavarian member of the Reichstag, Dr. Heim, played at this critical time has unfortunately never been quite explained. It was heart-rending to hear at the Reichs conference that we had summoned for 25th November, 1918, such language as this from the representatives of Free States: "We will not be lectured on our internal affairs; we will manage our finances alone." And that most Radical of tailors who make trousers and revolution in turns, Merges of Brunswick,

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

went for us badly, as he thought he gathered from our private and official statements that a united Reich—all Germany should be that—might be a fine result of the collapse. "What? A United State? Saxons! Detmolders! Waldeckers! Bavarians! Schleizers to the front! Your most sacred possessions are in danger through these bloodhounds, Ebert, Scheidemann and Landsberg. They want one big German Republic!"

His Majesty, the most gracious Emperor, King and Lord, who had fled to Holland, had other worries. We found no rest when we thought about what was to become of our poor Fatherland. The former Supreme War Lord wrote to us on 28th November:

"I have signed my abdication to the Throne in the form prescribed by the Government. I confidently expect that the Government, in accordance with their previous statement, will surrender my property and that of my family and guarantee without any limitations the lives, honour and possessions of all the Royal Family.

"WILHELM II."

We will say no more about the letter. We will rather have a look at the cellars in the Emperor's palace. Had not women to stand for hours for a few ounces of faked or rotten food? Did not starving men and women drop to the ground day by day? Did not my own wife go off in a dead faint at Friedenau after standing waiting for a couple of ounces of fat? . . . Yes, is it not true that they fetched out of the kitchen our last copper cooking-pot, screwed off the door-handles and melted down the church bells? All this is literally true. . . . Only one of the lot of us was spared, the one for whom all were to starve, bleed and die; the one who had not the sense to ab-

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

dicate at the right moment for the good of the German people. He admitted only the first half of the saying: All for one, one for all.

We will take a peep at his cellar. We can vouch for what it still looked like in 1918. We quote the *Berliner Tageblatt* of 20th November, 1918, which states that a member of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council made a thorough inspection of the Schloss, and reported as follows: "I was prepared to find a big store cupboard, but what I saw there surpassed all my expectations. In big white, panelled rooms was everything—yes, really everything—in the provision line that one could possibly conceive. No, I must put it better than that—one could not imagine it possible that, after four years of war, such colossal piles of food could be still found stored up. There we found meat and poultry on ice, soups and sauces in big bottles, pure white flour in sacks piled up to the ceiling. Thousands of eggs, huge tins of lard, coffee, chocolate, jellies and preserves of every kind, neatly arranged on apparently unending shelves. Hundreds of blue sugar loaves, stone fruit, dried fruit, biscuits, etc. One was speechless. The value of the provisions amounted to several hundred thousand marks. We were told on good authority that these piles of stores were for the Kaiser's private household, and not for the Court."

Liebknecht and His Revolutionists

The outbursts of the *Red Flag* were serious; the broadsheets were worse, and often anonymous. In Bremen, where the notorious and restless Radek had raged and fumed for years in the *Bürgerzeitung*, Bolshevism in its worst form was rampant. Order had to be preserved by soldiers. The fact that the Government had a few troops at its command obviously upset the blood-thirsty correspondents of the *Red Flag*. "They

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

—*i.e.* the Ebert-Scheidemann Government—want to plant their feet on the necks of the proletariat. Lower than ever shall it bow the knee. Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske will ensure the triumph of Capitalism with blood and iron. Never in the past history of class-warfare has blood been shed with such heartless, brutal, cynical wantonness, as by Ebert and Scheidemann. Out with these Ebert-Scheidemann men—these bloodhounds. We insist on the Berlin Labour Council being instantly summoned to try these bloodhounds! Mass meetings of protest against the murderers . . . !”

We could fill volumes with similar examples. Lunatics were let loose, and Russian agents. The language of the broadsheets became more virulent. All of them ended with incitement to murder. “Out you get to the streets! Get on with the Revolution. Down with the assassins of the working-classes.” The cruel murder of an officer, von Klüber, in Halle, and the S.D. Labour Minister of Saxony, Neuring, in Dresden, by infuriated crowds goaded to madness must be put down to the account of the *Rote Fahne*.

The first man to be given the name of “bloodhound” was Otto Wels. He had to take over the Governorship in Berlin, and was forced to interfere to clear the streets of armed Spartacists and Communists. The general feeling grew more and more exasperated. The citizen class, who at first had kept quiet, as well as the official class, now more emphatically insisted on this lawless conduct of the Bolshevik elements being resisted. The position of the S.D. working-man had become impossible. Every S.D. workman had to put up with abuse from any loafer thinking himself a revolutionist because he had stolen a gun or had a hand grenade in his pocket. All attempts to organize an armed force had failed up to now. The royal constabulary of the good old days behaved scandal-

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

ously whenever they were summoned to preserve order. The soldiers almost to a man disappeared as soon as they arrived in Berlin, or, if they did remain in Berlin, would only take on a paid job. All the soldiers returning home by detachments in good order under their Generals were welcomed by Ebert, Haase and myself with solemn speeches at the Brandenburger Gate. We described to them the war period, the collapse, the reforms effected, and demanded from them loyalty to the Fatherland and the Government. The commanders of the troops that first arrived took the oath of loyalty and obedience for themselves and their troops. From day to day we reckoned on being able to hold together at least a few detachments and on employing them in the fight against Soviet lunacy. Nothing came of it. The soldiers vanished over-night completely; they would not stop; they wanted to go home.

A Mysterious Enterprise

There was a weird scene on the night of 6th December, 1918. A band of armed workmen and soldiers, under a man called Spiro and the patronage of some gentlemen in the Foreign Office—Freiherr von Stumm and Rochus von Rheinbaben, Count Matuschka and others—paraded in front of the Chancery to proclaim Ebert President. We had better let the Rev. Felden describe the scene: "At this moment some individual in authority wired to Ebert about a Spartacist meeting in the rooms of the *Germania*, where wild threats against the Government were indulged in. A hundred and fifty men suddenly marched up in front of the Chancery. What was amiss now? An acting sergeant, one Fischer, entered and announced: 'Orders carried out. Cabinet arrested. Please confirm order of arrest.' Ebert," Felden continues, "could not believe his ears, and at once ordered the release of the prisoners.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

What was behind this farce? It appeared that two gentlemen from the Foreign Office had organized a revolutionary stunt with Herr von Stumm's financial support. Hardly had this gang departed when sailors and soldiers with rifles in their hands formed up in front of the Chancery. Spiro, already mentioned, addressed Ebert, demanding the speedy convocation of the National Assembly: 'The Cabinet shall no longer interfere unlawfully with the Government machine and force its hand. Relying on armed force and the knowledge that I am speaking for the whole nation, I proclaim you, Herr Ebert, President of the German Republic. Long live the President, Fritz Ebert.' "

Ebert declined with thanks. The extraordinary stunt caused tremendous excitement at the time, and even to-day has not been wholly explained. It is very desirable that it should be cleared up, because all the talk about Ebert being privy to it would be certainly silenced. After the failure of the stunt, Ledebour demanded the arrest of Dr. Simons, afterwards President of the Reich. Others even demanded that he should be shot, as he had, they alleged, collected money for the purpose. Of the Foreign Office gentlemen mentioned, Count Matuschka bolted, and soon after him Freiherr Stumm. In circles to which these gentlemen belonged, especially by Freiherr Rochus von Rheinbaben, it is confidently stated even to-day that the stunt was planned with Ebert's consent. Ebert, to the dismay of the conspirators who had staked their position and lives, failed them at the last moment, probably because he got news before the gang appeared of outbreaks in the north of Berlin (see Felden's report). Fheiherr von Rheinbaben told me that, as originally planned, it was not Spiro, but a certain Marten who was intended to proclaim Ebert President. He said further: "We were only concerned with

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

the soldiers." The day before the stunt 100,000 marks had been given him (Rheinbaben) by Erzberger in his own office. He had handed the money to the person concerned.

That, with regard to the Cabinet and the Independents in the Government, influence was brought to bear on this and that member of the S.D. representatives with a view to establishing a dictatorship and order, remained just as little a secret as the repudiation of all these suspicions.

Noisy processions of many thousands, mostly armed to the teeth, were continuously organized by Leibknecht in front of the Chancery. Dozens of motor lorries conveyed masses of machine-guns, bombs and similar weapons of destruction. The People's Representatives had hardly any protection. A guard of a very "scratch" kind one day made certain claims that were not entertained. Its sailors thereupon seized the telephones in the Chancery and imprisoned the People's Representatives of the S.D. present in the office. Their release was eventually brought about because this "trusty" guard had failed to notice a telephone wire running direct from the Chancery to Main Headquarters in Kassel. Scheuch, the acting Minister of War in the old War Office in the Leipziger Strasse, must have known of this connection. He managed to get together a couple of dozen Warrant Officers, who then brought the unreliable Naval Guard to their senses.

The People's Representatives practically did their work as prisoners. The S.D. members of the Government dared not venture into the streets in the day-time, as they would have been killed. To Liebknecht's followers we pretended we had a military guard, although we had none. None of us was minded to quit his post, as this would have meant handing Germany over to Bolshevism. Liebknecht went on making speeches, only to be surpassed in oratory by Ledebour. At the

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

head of armed crowds Liebknecht paraded here, there and everywhere, but always ended up in front of the Chancery in order to voice his terrible threats.

Meanwhile the *Vorwärts* and the whole newspaper quarter were stormed by the Spartacists. There was heavy fighting between Liebknecht's frantic followers and small detachments of troops which had gradually mustered. There were serious losses on both sides. We kept the upper hand. Negotiations that were opened between independent leaders and ourselves for a cessation of hostilities against Spartacus came to nothing. The negotiators took the same view as the former Government took over the Belgium question. They wanted to take charge of all newspapers except the *Vorwärts*; they intended keeping this paper as a pledge till all questions were finally settled. Had we accepted this proposal, the Bolshevik wave would have swept away all the barriers we had constructed with such trouble to ensure the life of the democratic Republic.

The Fight for the National Assembly

At the Council meetings of the People's Representatives there were constant collisions over the future National Assembly. We wanted the election as soon as possible—the Independents wanted to postpone it. They thought the people would not have sufficient time to consider how they should vote as the proletariat required. Prisoners of war should not be robbed of their vote. We should have to wait a long time for them! We Social Democrats were sure the election would be the less satisfactory the longer it was postponed, and an increasing number of electors were disgusted with mad Communistic actions. The danger of the Council dissolving owing to differences on the question was constantly present.

Ebert, Landsberg and I had threatened to withdraw in



CONGRESS OF THE BOARDS OF LABOURERS AND SOLDIERS OF GERMANY, DECEMBER 16, 1918
(1) *Cohen, Max*, (2) *Scheidemann*, (3) *Landsberg*, (4) *Haase*, (5) *Ebert*, (6) *Emil Barth*.

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

the early days of the Council if the date of the National Assembly election were not fixed for the end of November. The dictatorship of Liebknecht and Ledebour we firmly declined. Ultimately a resolution was passed that the fixing of the date should be left to the general congress of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. We Social Democrats had no doubt that the Congress would decide in accordance with our wishes. The Congress met in Berlin from 16th to 21st December in the Prussian Diet. The proceedings were repeatedly interrupted by Liebknecht, who, together with Rosa Luxemburg, should not have had a seat. He marched up and down in front of the Diet with his gangs of men and women, who had been on strike for weeks, and talked and talked at any hour of the day before the gate or from the balcony. He frequently alluded to the Labour traitors and bloodhounds sitting inside. The working men, urged on by him, constantly invaded in bigger or smaller groups the meeting hall of the Congress, carrying notice-boards with rather mysterious inscriptions, and stormed, spouted and abused. I was a special butt for their anger. The Congress had often to suspend its sittings, yet did not let itself be put out of action, and duly finished its business. It must not be thought that all the Congress men were against Liebknecht. By no means! Wild independent members supported him strongly. In proof of that, the remarkable receptions constantly given me may be mentioned. It can be seen from the shorthand report of the Congress that I supported the speedy convocation of the National Assembly and spoke against the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils as prolonging the agony. I was interrupted frequently—naturally from the galleries—but the following describes the situation at the time (according to the report) much better: "During my speech a crowd of united revolutionaries again entered the hall with Haase at

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

their head." When I proposed 19th January as the polling day I was uproariously applauded from the majority, as the report says, but there was some hissing from the gallery. As the debate continued, Ledebour shouted: "We stand together against the *bourgeoisie*, against the men on this bench. . . ." On this bench were sitting his closest friends, Haase, Dittmann and Barth, as People's Representatives. Gustavus Rickelt, Chairman of the Actors' Union, a curious-tempered fellow, yelled out at Ledebour in a stentorian voice, "Senseless and obstinate." On my rising to speak in order to answer Ledebour at once, there was wild commotion. The official report says: "The People's Representative, Scheidemann, was received with loud and tumultuous cheers and clapping by the majority. There was some hissing from one gallery. Great disorder lasted for minutes. Huge excitement reigned in the meeting. It came almost to blows. Minutes elapsed before the speaker got a hearing."

I was, it is true, frequently interrupted, but could end my speech with these words: "The answer to Ledebour's speech will be given by the workers on 19th January." The Congress, by an overwhelming majority, fixed the polling day for 19th January. Professor Dr. Bredt, in his excellent book on the Reichstag in war-time, says that the general Congress was the salvation of Germany.

If at first the future Convention was said to be the ideal crowning triumph of the revolutionary movement for Ledebour and his friends, it was afterwards abused as an instrument of counter revolution. Naturally anyone who did not agree with Liebknecht, Luxemburg and Ledebour was invariably pronounced a reactionary. The Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils had proved that the great majority of the workers was behind the Social Democracy of Germany. After the

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

resolution of the Congress the dispute over the National Assembly was finished so far as the People's Representatives were concerned. During the preparations for the Election, which were conducted with great zeal, the Communists threatened to interfere at the polls. "We shall be able to stop the election by force." "The elections to the National Assembly shall only take place over my corpse," the Radical Richard Müller declared on 10th November. Later he understood it was better to live in a Republic than to die for Russian Bolshevik humbug.

Towards the end of 1918 public feeling became more irritated. At one of the many collisions in which, as Governor of Berlin, Wels was involved almost daily with Liebknecht's hordes, an attack was made on the Governor's house just before Christmas, which ended in Governor Wels being taken to the ex-Kaiser's stables, where the People's Naval Division talked, like Liebknecht, from morning to night. They threatened to shoot Wels.

About evening a telephone message was received from the sailors' leader Radke, who always said he was trying to pacify the sailors, saying that he would no longer be responsible for Wels's life. Ebert, who had taken over all the military arrangements, gave instructions late in the evening in Landsberg's and my presence—not one of the Independents being in the house—to the Minister for War to effect Governor Wels's release with General von Léquis's troops, stationed at Potsdam. As the repeated order to release Wels was ignored, fire was opened on the Schloss and the royal stables. These days of bloodshed at Christmas time will always be an evil memory. Gunfire shattered part of the front of the stables. Fresh parleys ultimately led to terminating the fight and to Wels's release. Casualties were numerous on both sides. Seventy or more lay dead on Christmas Eve in the streets of Berlin. During

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

the fight some Independents even advocated the abolition of civil war and fraternal strife, but in the evening of the 25th the fight broke out afresh, when the crowd, egged on by their leaders, stormed and occupied the premises of the *Vorwärts*. On the 26th their evacuation was happily accomplished. The following days were devoted, so to speak, to a general stock-taking of the followers of both sides. By huge demonstrations the Social Democrats showed how little their supporters had in common with these bloodthirsty champions of the Revolution. The first conference of the Spartacus Union was held during these days, at which Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were already in the minority among the ultra-Radicals. In connection with these events, the Prussian Government decided on getting rid of Eichorn, the Independent Commissioner of Police, who, on hearing of the fight round the royal stables, had personally ordered the workmen of the associations, organized on Spartacus lines, to leave their work and fetch arms for themselves from the Police Headquarters. A damning fact against Eichorn was that he had received pay from the Rosta, the private Information Department in Moscow. On 5th January Ernst was appointed Eichorn's successor. On the same day big election meetings for the National Assembly were held all over Berlin. On the evening of 5th January civil war broke out again and with an intensity hitherto unknown, while under Ledebour and Liebknecht, who loomed up as a new Government and had superseded Ebert and Scheidemann on paper, the occupation of the newspaper quarter mentioned above, and many public buildings, took place.

Otto Wels

After talking with Ebert, I stepped into the lobby to go to my room. There—I could not believe my eyes: “For God’s



THE SPARTACUS TERROR IN BERLIN: THE BUILDING OF THE
"VORWÄRTS" AFTER THE ATTACK OF DECEMBER 25, 1918

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

sake, who's that? No, it's impossible. It's—Otto Wels? Yes—no, it can't be—yes, it is." The sailors had at last released him on terms. He looked like a ghost. His face was ashy-grey and wrinkled; his eyes, which had looked death in the face, were sunken. Once, twice and thrice had the mad soldiers put him against the wall and with their rifles in their hands said, "Now your end has come; you'll be finished off now." My joy at seeing him again alive was almost dispelled by the rage which convulsed me. "Woe unto us, woe to the whole people if these lunatics get control. Russia has clearly proved what happens when murder begins. . . ." My friend's clothes were dirty and torn; his waistcoat was in tatters. His hands were trembling. He could hardly stand on his legs. I remembered I had still a drop of brandy in a small medicine bottle. I rushed away to fetch it. The brandy worked miracles. Wels had never drunk a drop with more eagerness. While he was settling down I went off to Ebert to tell him of the return of the man we had almost given up. Ebert was naturally glad that Wels was still alive, but his thoughts were clearly elsewhere. I asked him: "What are you going to do with Otto?" "Yes, what are we to do with him? He's finished with; he'll see that himself. He can't go back to his job. He's no good for us any more." "What do you mean?" "As things stand, he can't be considered for the Governorship or for any other job." "Upon my word, I don't understand you. Because madmen wished to kill him. . . ." "We might perhaps take him with us to keep him out of more dangers." "What are you talking about? What does it all mean? I don't understand you a bit." "I've got Baake to get us a special train and take us out of this place to-night. We can't stop here."

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

I had almost forgotten the half-dead Wels during this scene. I ran off to Landsberg to see whether between the two of us we could not stop Ebert's travel trip. It was not the first time or the last that Ebert wanted to transfer the seat of Government. Until they decided to summon the National Assembly to Weimar we had always managed to do without a move.

Noske Forms a Defence Force

As a protest against the bloodshed in the fight for Wels's release the Independents seceded from the Council of the People's Representatives. They did not intend taking any responsibility for the slaughter caused by their own and Liebknecht's followers. Now we had the chance and also the duty of getting together a united Government. Wissell, whom we asked to join the Government owing to his sound knowledge, especially of agriculture, at once consented. Noske at first hesitated, as he had no wish to be turned out again in a short time, as was the fate of everyone now joining the Government. However, he ultimately accepted our invitation. Loebe, whom we also asked, declined, as he could not get away from Breslau. We finally did without the sixth man and carried on with five. Noske was instructed to organize a reliable defensive force. As long as we did not possess such, the power of the Government was a myth. If the People's Naval Division in the royal stables had parleyed another hour with the troops on Christmas Eve—which would not have been difficult, as we knew afterwards—General von Léquis must have surrendered; he had already sent an officer to the Chancery to ask for instructions.

"Either negotiations have to be authorized, or—well or? Or we must give up fighting." The troops in course of a few hours had been completely surrounded, "cajoled" and

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

demoralized by women Communists and their children. The Russian Communists had thoroughly coached their German comrades.

Noske had to start from the very beginning. Hard work though it was, he could at least begin without being hampered by irresolute People's Representatives who had not the courage to meet force with force. Noske got to work at once. He started in Dahlem in a girls' school which was unoccupied owing to the holidays. He saw how rotten the power of the People's Representatives was. "My colleagues in the Government are in a mouse-trap; regular work was not possible because of the shooting going on near by." So he says in his book, "Von Kiel bis Kapp."

After the withdrawal of the Independents from the Government the tide of Bolshevism rose higher and higher throughout the Empire. Revolts broke out in Bremen, Leipzig and the Ruhr, etc.

On the Communist fête day in Berlin at the end of December Radek ordered the workers to fight a decisive battle, with the support of the red armies of Russia, against English Capitalism on the Rhine. Rühle, a Saxon schoolmaster, whose nerves had gone wrong during the Revolution, demanded street fighting on a grand scale. A motion proposed by him, but opposed by Rosa Luxemburg, to stop by all means in their power the meeting of the National Assembly, was adopted by sixty-two votes to twenty-three. Following on that, Spartacus careered through the streets of Berlin for seven days. Noske had meanwhile got together a detachment of troops, supposed to be reliable. On 11th January he marched from Dahlem to Berlin to show off his men. At Ebert's request I drove out to meet them, and marched at Noske's side from the Schöneberger High Street to the Potsdamer Platz. The

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

troops were joyfully welcomed all along the route; the vast majority of the populace was up in arms over the Bolshevik reign of terror. The detachment worked wonders. Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, however, still fulminated in the *Rote Fahne* in broadsheets and at meetings, but the desperate and senseless street fighting did not now occur every day. The Communists reviled Ledebour's wild revolutionaries.

The mass demonstrations of 5th January, 1919, organized under Ledebour's patronage, were virulently attacked in the *Rote Fahne*. Ledebour meant fighting to a finish. The revolutionary leaders decided on his motion by eighty votes to six on battle, pitched battle under arms. Masses of men were parading the Tiergarten. This is what the *Rote Fahne* says:

"... From the Roland as far as the Victoria stood the proletarians shoulder to shoulder. They streamed away right into the Tiergarten. They had their arms with them and waved their flags. They were ready to do anything, to sacrifice all, even life itself. An army of 100,000 men such as Ludendorff never saw.

"Now a miracle happened. The crowds stood stolidly in the cold and fog from nine in the morning. Somewhere their leaders were sitting in council. The fog descended and the masses still stood. But the leaders were deliberating. The masses were all agog with excitement; they wanted something done, only a word to quiet their feelings, hardly anyone knew what, for the leaders were deliberating. The fog came down once more, and with it the dusk. The crowds went sadly home; they had intended great things, and had done nothing. For the leaders were deliberating. They had met in the royal stables; from there they went to the Police Headquarters and deliberated further. Outside on the empty



A PORTAL OF THE CASTLE OF BERLIN, SHOT TO PIECES,
AFTER THE STREET BATTLES

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

Alexander-platz stood the proletarians, their rifles in their hands, with light and heavy machine-guns. And inside the leaders were deliberating. At the Police Headquarters cannons were to be seen; sailors stood in every corner of the corridors. . . . And inside sat the leaders deliberating. They sat there the whole day and the whole night deliberating. . . . They were deliberating—aye, deliberating.”

In other words, the chatterers were chattering as they had always chattered.

There is no doubt that much more could have been done for the working-classes than was done. The Social Democratic Representatives were full of the best intentions. The Bolshevik rant was again causing street-fighting and outbreaks, through which the real work of the People's Representatives was almost completely held up. Their chief duty had been forced upon them. They had to try to hold on to their authority till the meeting of the National Assembly, because otherwise Bolshevism would, as sure as fate, have swamped the German people. The talk of over-clever folk, who then demanded that the Bolsheviks must be shot down and who now say that one should have squashed the reactionaries on the Right once and for all, is only quoted as an example of a prevalent lapse of memory.

The Murder of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg

With my friends in Kassel a meeting had been arranged for 16th January, 1919, at which I was to speak, as I was a candidate for the National Assembly. I was to speak once at any rate to the electors, and on the night of 16th January I travelled from Berlin to Kassel. In the train I met Colonel von Feldmann, later Secretary of State for the Ministry of Imperial Defence—a man who was not popular with us owing

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

to his pushing ways. He would have been only too keen to be somebody. On reading later of his having been Hindenburg's political adviser in Hanover and of the second President's idea to make him a Secretary of State, many things became clear to me. The Imperial and Republican Colonel and I were bound for the same place—Kassel. He had to report for duty in Wilhelmshöhe, now the Headquarters. In course of the forenoon on the 16th I was rung up at the hotel "Kasseler Hof" from Wilhelmshöhe. Feldmann had told people I was in Kassel and I was invited to lunch by General von Hindenburg and General Groener. I accepted and went off in the car which the Generals sent, to the hotel where they were quartered.

The menu was no surprise to me; it was as like our Berlin fare as one potato soup is like another; knives and forks were not to be had. Only General Groener, who was seedy, had a slice of meat. I sat on Hindenburg's right; left and right of us sat the Staff Officers.

During the meal an orderly officer called General Groener to the telephone in his room on the first floor, saying there was important news from Berlin. A minute later the General asked me to come up, as the message was for me. From Berlin, Baake, Secretary of State, said: "I have very bad news. Last night Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered. Ebert wants you to return at once, for it is feared that there will be the dickens of a row. You must talk with General Groener about getting a special train at once."

I was terribly upset, but said it was impossible to return at once—it was also not necessary because I could not reach Berlin till late at night. That was no good. Twenty-two thousand tickets had been sold for my meeting. I would deliver

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

my speech and then travel back during the night. Ebert, who was on the telephone himself, was very excited, but eventually said he agreed to what I proposed, as I could get to Berlin early next morning.

After my speeches in the Stadthalle—one outside, one in the corridor, in the Great and after in the Blue Hall, I hurried off to the station. General Groener arranged everything so that I could start at once. At the railway station I was given a time-table, from which I saw that every station through which the train had to pass had been informed by telegram. This startled me. I got into bed, however, did not worry and was soon asleep, but I was awakened in Eichenberg by the guard or the station-master telling me that the train could not go any further by the route arranged, as they had received news from Seesen that the Spartacists had occupied the station half an hour before in order to get hold of me. That was the result of the wire, to which they had added foolishly that I was in the train. The official proposed altering the route and taking me to Berlin via Nordhausen. I said I agreed, and went off to sleep again. But before we got to Nordhausen I was again awakened and told by a guard that the second plan could not be carried out. The station—I did not catch the name—had meanwhile, it was reported, also been occupied by the Spartacists. He advised me to consent to an attempt being made to get me through to Berlin by a branch line. I naturally approved. Just as I wanted to lie down again the official asked me whether it would not be better for me to lie down in my clothes. I did not think so, but asked him to put my overcoat, that was hanging up on the wall, where I could get my hands into the pockets. I took out my gun, laid it at full cock under my pillow and slept on with a good conscience, worn out, till I was wakened up at seven o'clock

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

at the Potsdamer Station in Berlin. The platform, which is usually deserted, was shut and I had to get out by a side entrance to reach the Wannsee line; there were dozens of railway officials and porters standing about. These were not a little astonished to see me leave the station alone with my little bag, on my way on foot to the Wilhelmstrasse.

The National Assembly Elections

The elections for the National Assembly passed off on the whole quite quietly. The bloodthirsty threats of the Communists did not mature, because the modest military force that had been assembled had inspired the "Moscow" men with a certain amount of respect. A murderous attack was made on some peaceable demonstrators in Düsseldorf. Social Democrats and Democrats had organized a joint demonstration for the democratic Republic. This was fallen upon by Communist gangs and shot at. Result: fourteen dead and several wounded. Whenever troops were employed to protect the public against such anarchy—the police did not count in the present state of affairs—loud were the howls of the Communists against the Government. "The murdering hordes of the Ebert-Scheidemann Government are on the war-path. The attainment of an improved standard of life is to be suppressed by force." The cowardly murder of democratic demonstrators was a fight for an improved standard of life in the eyes of the Communists. The protection of the population against these remarkable friends of man was the advance of murdering hordes!

The votes recorded for the S.D. Party were 11,446,716; for the Independents 2,314,332; for the Centre 6,021,456; for the Democrats 5,601,621; for the German People's Party 1,240,303; for the German National Party 3,199,573. By the pro-

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

portional representation system according to the number of votes, 163 Social Democrats, 22 Independents, 88 members of the Centre, 75 Democrats, 42 German National Party, 21 German People's Party and 10 members for odd groups—together 421 representatives—entered the National Assembly. A Social Democratic Government could not be formed, because the necessary majority of 211 could not be obtained from the Social Democrats and Independents combined. Among the Independents were the Communists, in spite of their promise to abstain. The election had very clearly shown how weak the so-called Radical Left was. Of 421 members only 22 belonged to it. Had it not been for serious disputes among the workers the result would have been a better one.

I was elected for two seats, Kassel and Berlin. I chose Kassel.

Two days after the National Assembly elections, the chauffeur who drove me about in the official car refused to drive me again unless he were armed and had a companion also armed. Under the impression that I was in his car he had been repeatedly held up and threatened by loafers who said they were revolutionaries.

Ebert would not assent to the National Assembly being held in Berlin in any circumstances. He had asked Privy Councillor Jungheim, then Controller in the Reichstag, to inspect a few towns on the chance of their being suitable for the meetings of the National Assembly. Jungheim came back with the news that he thought Weimar would suit, as the theatre there could be adapted very well for Parliamentary meetings. Noske plumped for Weimar, because he thought that in Berlin the safety of the National Assembly could not be wholly guaranteed and the armed force at his disposal was still too small.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Ebert on the Duties of the President

In these days I was frequently asked how we intended to proceed at Weimar and what proposals we were going to make to the Section on the composition of the Government. I referred them all to Ebert, and no one told me what his answer was. As I was for the third time Joint Chairman with him on the Party Executive, the Section Executive and at the Council of Representatives I had willy-nilly to ask him various questions: "Are you quite clear about Weimar? When will you speak?" Ebert: "I shall speak first. The Presidency will suit me best." What followed was a surprise even for me, as it was quite evident that matters which we had considered subsidiary or scarcely considered at all had been meticulously thought out by Ebert. He had made his plans with extraordinary tactical skill, that I always recognized as ruthless.

"We must be quite clear about the proposals for the new Government. The Section certainly expects it of us." "I have been thinking it over, and am convinced you must take over the job of Chancellor." "Me? I don't understand you. After all the work you have had in arranging the course of business I take it for granted that you take the office of Chancellor or Prime Minister. You need not bother about me. My wants are more than satisfied." "Ah! that's nonsense. We have already——" "Do not misunderstand me, Fritz. If you think it right, and the Section too, that I should serve as a Minister under you as Chancellor, I am naturally ready." "You have not let me finish. We surely want a President." "Have you really thought it out?" "I think the Presidency suits me best——" "Fritz, we must have a serious talk about this. Whether a President is considered necessary by the Section and the National Assembly is not yet certain accord-

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES AT WORK

ing to the recent discussions.”¹ “But of course it is!” “Supposing that it is a matter of course, I do not think it a matter of course that a colleague should take over the job.” “I do not understand that.” “Compare the authority a President of the Reich will have in a republic with strong Social Democratic leanings, with that of a strong Chancellor! Besides, we are the strongest Party in the National Assembly, and have therefore a claim to the Presidency in Parliament; we will have a Chancellor in any case and the Presidency of the Reich as well! We won’t get that through. Then again attacks by Radical working men will be made on a S.D. President, if these do not turn Socialist. He will be attacked and harm done to the Party. Just to give my notion: the S.D. President of the Reich is the red pennant flying at the mast-head, and does not mean very much. The Chancellor, on the contrary, is to be compared to the captain or the pilot. You are the right man for the job. As a figure-head you would be wasted!” “I have a different notion of the powers of the Reichs-President from you. He will be able to do an enormous lot.” “Here we will agree to differ. By the first President a distinct type of man for later Presidents will be created. If the first President is a Social Democrat, who is alive and uses his position to his own political advantage, his successors may prove very obnoxious to us. Whether the next President be also a Social Democrat, depends on this.”

The longer the conversation lasted the clearer it became that our views were very far apart over this question. What

¹ To understand these last words it must be said that the question of the Reichs-President was then being widely discussed on principle. By certain groups it was warmly advocated that a President for Prussia should be appointed. This idea was at once strongly opposed. In close connection with these questions a discussion was going on as to whether a President was necessary for the Reich. Parallels between Switzerland and other republics were drawn. At these discussions I expressed an opinion that it was perhaps advisable to propose a man as President of the Reich, outside politics, prominent in art or literature, who was a sound Republican and universally respected.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Ebert understood by the Reichs-President was simply this: the Reichs-President settles policy and the Chancellor supports it. On reading through these notes that I made in January, 1919, many years later, it struck me forcibly that Ebert formed a better idea of the permanency and authority of the Reichs-President than did the Chancellor. Ten years after the break-up of the Empire the second Reichs-President was in office, and we had already had fifteen changes of Governments. In the various Governments Social Democrats had acted eight times as Chancellor and Premier; whereas the office of Reichs-President had only been filled once by a Social Democrat.

That the German people, after all its experiences in the Empire and the War, should not have learnt within ten years to form a practical Parliament with a strong Government on the basis of the new Constitution, I had not anticipated, any more than I had anticipated that too great political power in the German Republic would be given to the Reichs-President in my opinion.

IX

IN WEIMAR

THE journey to Weimar passed off very well. There was even in the special train, packed with members of the Government and their clerks, a feeling of pleasurable excitement, and no wonder after the grievous months that lay behind us! In the carriage jokes were made, as we approached the Hall of Bolshevism, about the Communists who were probably on the lookout for us. When the train ran into the station, Ulrich Rauscher, later our Ambassador in Warsaw, looked out of the window and called out to us in a reassuring voice, after a glance at the porters: "Everything is O.K.; the Communists have already numbered everybody."

Kurt Baake, a good old comrade, Ebert's adviser on many occasions during the War, had been since 9th November Ebert's right-hand man as Under-Secretary. I had managed, but with great difficulty and trouble, to persuade Baake not to give up his job. He said to me once in a voice trembling with anger, that, for personal reasons, his job had become intolerable. Reminding him of my own experiences, I tried to comfort him, and coaxed him back into a good temper.

In Weimar Noske had his first brush with the native Radical comrades, who, as international revolutionists, refused to have any "foreign" troops in Weimar. Instead of the soldiers brought in by Noske and quartered in the neighbourhood for Weimar's protection they wanted to call out the "native" troops. Thuringia for the Thuringians! like America for the

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Americans! Noske's troops, mustered with much trouble and difficulty and chiefly comprised of Prussians, were naturally not sent away. At first everything went like clockwork. A slump only occurred when the proposals were invited for forming the Government. As, to the great surprise of the Section, not one of the People's Representatives opened his mouth, it was resolved that the Executive of the Section should consult with the People's Representatives and then make suitable proposals. The joint meeting took place in the dressing-room of a Weimar artist! My report is given from the notes I then made. On Loebe asking what the proposals of the Section were, there was a pause. Then Dr. David spoke: "We beg to propose Ebert as Reichs-President and Scheidemann as Prime Minister." E. Auer of Munich got up: "David's proposal surprises me." In the Section Ebert made any further remark unnecessary by saying: "I ask you to accept David's proposal. It is in accordance with an agreement made in Berlin."

Frederick Ebert was undoubtedly, as he again proved, our best man for the office of Reichs-President. He was not only an astute but also a vigorous politician.

The First Republican Government

The opening of the National Assembly by the Senior President Wilhelm Pfannkuch, my own countryman and first political instructor, took place on 6th February, 1919. Ebert delivered an address of welcome. He stated that the Provisional Government owed its authority to the Revolution. It would hand it over to the National Assembly. "The German people is free, remains free and will govern itself in the future. This freedom is the only consolation left to the German people." Ebert's excellent speech did not please Dr.

IN WEIMAR

Stresemann in the very least. He called it (22nd February, 1919) a paltry Party speech: "Not every man can rise to the level of his good intentions; certainly Herr Ebert cannot." Stresemann was then trying to outdo the German Nationals in active agitation during the worst days of the Republic. On 13th April, 1919, he made merry over Ebert and excited the hilarity of his National friends. He compared the S.D. Reichs-President with a Prussian King or German Emperor—those central points, round which everything national circulates. "Ebert is no central point." He added in scorn of Hermann Müller, the first S.D. Foreign Minister, that he owed his position to the fact that he had been present at a few International Congresses. The welcome change which has been noticeable in Herr Stresemann in recent years is quite extraordinary.

To return to the National Assembly. It elected Dr. David President with 374 votes. On 11th February the election of the Reichs-President took place. Out of 379 votes Ebert got 277, Count Posadowsky 51; 50 votes were divided among the rest. I was elected Premier with the task of forming a Government. On 13th February I was able to introduce to the National Assembly the first Cabinet after the collapse, duly formed on Parliamentary and democratic lines.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

Philipp Scheidemann, Prime Minister.

Bauer, Minister of Labour.

Edward David, Minister without Portfolio.

Otto Landsberg, Minister of Justice.

Noske, Minister of Defence.

Robert Schmidt, Minister of Food.

Rudolf Wissell, Minister of Agriculture.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

CENTRE

Johannes Bell, Minister for the Colonies.
Erzberger, Minister without Portfolio.
Giesberts, Postmaster-General.

DEMOCRATS

Eugene Schiffer, Minister of Finance.
Gothein, Minister without Portfolio.
Hugo Preuss, Minister for Home Affairs.

Count Brockdorff-Rantzau was appointed as Foreign Secretary. We counted him as a Social Democrat, though he was not a member of the Social Democratic Party.

David's appointment as Minister without Portfolio was due to the Centre insisting on appointing the President for the National Assembly. "You cannot claim all three Presidents." This had been distinctly foreseen. In David's place Fehrenbach became President of the National Assembly. I made the introductory speech, advocating in Home Affairs a policy of consolidating the unity of the Reich by a strong central authority. For Foreign Affairs a speedy conclusion of peace on Wilson's principles and the rejection of any peace by compulsion. The immediate surrender of all German prisoners of war, membership of the League of Nations, simultaneous and mutual disarmament, abolition of secret diplomacy, etc., were required. Naturally economic and social-political questions were to be thoroughly discussed, especially the problem of agriculture and land reform. This programme, of course, did not satisfy us Social Democrats—it was pure compromise; but the voice of assent was heard for guaranteeing personal and political rights, freedom of thought, religious liberty, free



EBERT'S SPEECH, HELD AT THE OPENING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AT WEIMAR,
FEBRUARY 6, 1919

expression of opinion, whether verbal or written, freedom of the Press, clubs and societies, and the right of holding meetings and assemblies.

The National Assembly approved of the laws and ordinances passed by the People's Representatives, set up an emergency legislative system and went hard to work. Nothing was lacking. Besides innumerable enactments and measures that had to be put into force owing to the collapse, and to avoid complete chaos, special obligations with regard to the Armistice had to be carried out. Food supplies, provision for the wounded, and the reorganization of the Army necessitated much work, and, in addition, the settlement of the question as to what should be done for the many thousands of officers, N.C.O.'s and military officials who had to be disbanded. All these duties meant countless Cabinet meetings, Ministerial conversations, the receiving of deputations and meetings of Committees and Sections.

Meanwhile the Communists were agitating, now here, now there. The position was especially serious in the Wasseikante and Thuringia, in Gotha, Eisenach and Erfurt. Kurt Eisner, the Bavarian Premier, had been murdered by Count Arco on 21st February in Munich. In Berlin wild general strikes assumed serious proportions—water and light supplies had been cut off from the hospitals; striking evidence of the ruthlessness of Communist strikes and outbreaks were given by broadsheets then circulating. For instance: "Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske are the enemies of the Revolution. To keep their jobs they have sold you to the *bourgeoisie*; they have betrayed you. They have bound you hip and thigh to the National Convention and are murdering you day by day. The Revolution can only march forward over the grave of this Social Democratic majority."

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Nervousness increased among all classes. One of the worst memories of this time is the shooting of twenty-nine innocent sailors in Berlin, who were escorted to a yard to receive their pay and were massacred at the order of one Marloh, a Lieut.-Commander; likewise the murder of ten hostages by Communists and the slaughter of a Catholic brotherhood in a wild soldiers' riot in Munich. Communists, Spartacists and many Independents who intended to continue the Revolution were the sponsors of the emergency measures taken—the Defence Force, for instance, and the best supporters of reaction.

The most important results of the National Assembly were the creation of the Constitution and the negotiations on the Versailles Treaty. The Constitution of the German Republic has still many weak spots, for in politics nothing is perfect, but it cannot be denied that it is the freest constitution in the world. The weakest spot—and it still exists—is that the people have not yet made it a thing of life. Everything is learnt in time. A nation without national unity, that has been broken up into feeble small States and has submitted for years to the tyranny of Junkers under the unjust electoral law of Prussia, must first learn how to enjoy freedom and take advantage of its constitutional rights.

X

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

THE delegates who went to Versailles at the end of April with Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, the Foreign Secretary, as President, were Landsberg, Minister of Justice, Giesberts, Postmaster-General, Leinert, President of the Diet, Dr. Melchior-Hamburg, the banker, and the International Law Professor, Schücking, a member of the National Assembly. The Peace Treaty handed to these delegates on 7th May was the most iniquitous piece of work ever produced by blind hatred and senseless fury. Prince Max's Government, in its telegraphic communications with Wilson, took expressly as its basis the points formulated by the President of the United States. These points were as valid with the Entente as their solemn assurances that "the Entente was not waging war against the German people, but against Kaiserism and Prussian militarism." Although the Kaiser had fled, and was therefore non-existent, although Prussian militarism lay prostrate on the ground, while the countries of the Entente were armed to the teeth, although a Parliament elected by the people and a Government with a Social Democratic President and Premier represented the German nation—in spite of all this, here was this mad dictated Treaty, by which a people of seventy millions was to be enslaved and shorn of its honour and defence for scores of years.

"Never! never!" was the despairing unanimous cry throughout the land. "Never!" in unimportant coteries could

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

be heard mutterings of doubt. "Never!" said Erzberger in the early days when irresponsible orators pleaded for immediate acceptance. The heavy roller went many times over this dictated Peace. It is not my business to write a history of the fight over the Peace. My job can only be to pick out a few of the chief points, which should specially justify my negative attitude. I must refer to my book, and supplement it as far as is necessary. The abuse of Party rancour from the Right and the responsibility put on my shoulders for these happenings, which I disclaimed at every possible turn during the negotiations, will always be for me a revelation of a very unpleasant type. So strong was still the fury of these war protracters against the Scheidemann Peace, which they, after the devastating Peace that was wrung from them, should have been only too glad to accept.

The conversations on the subject of the Peace had begun already in the time of the six People's Representatives, and along with the negotiations for the inevitable prolongation of the Armistice, left their mark on the Weimar Conference in its early days. It was not only a question of carefully examining every single item, but of choosing men who should take part, of taking the necessary preliminary steps and of sorting out the multitudes of proposed and necessary experts.

Prolonged negotiations were necessary, it is true, but the main question of signing or not signing had not yet cropped up. Even when the enemy Peace Treaty was before us, and all Germany, first with consternation and then with unparalleled primitive fury, heard of this ruthless intention to destroy, the will to enter on negotiations at all costs and the hope of reaching the calm waters of agreement triumphed over the idea of immediate repudiation.

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

The Cabinet's Alteration of My Speech

With the Cabinet's approval I bore in mind this determination, the only one politically possible, when I made my report in its name for the first time, directly after the Versailles document was handed in, to the Peace Select Committee meeting at the Treasury in Berlin. I was not sparing with my words of condemnation, but referred at the same time to the prime necessity of the hour: "Negotiate, take every chance offered." The same view was uppermost in my mind when I later prepared the speech I was to make in the Aula before the National Assembly. I, who was fully determined on rejecting the Treaty, in its present form, had no idea of scoring a cheap success, but wanted before all else not to ruin any chance of negotiating.

At the Cabinet meeting on Monday, 12th May, in the forenoon, there were mainly Democrats present who were pressing for a decisive no. The other Ministers, with the sole exception of David, who by some mischance raised a dissenting voice only after the meeting, joined in with the Democrats, and instead of the sentence quoted this new one was inserted: "This Treaty cannot be accepted, in the opinion of the Government."

In my opinion the question as far as the members of the Cabinet were concerned was finished and done with, as any signature was absolutely unthinkable if quite important concessions were not made.

In the Aula of Berlin University

On the afternoon of 12th May a meeting of the National Assembly took place in the new Aula of the University. As Prime Minister, I spoke on behalf of the Government on the

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Versailles Treaty. A few extracts from the speech may be given here:

"On strange premises in emergency quarters, the representatives of the nation have met together, like a last remnant of loyal men, at a time when the Fatherland is in the gravest danger. All are present except the Alsace-Lorrainers, from whom the right of being here represented has been taken away, as well as the right of exercising their privilege of self-determination as free men.

"When I see lined up here the representatives of German stock and nationality, men chosen from the Rhineland, the Saar Basin, West and East Prussia, Posen, Silesia and Memel, side by side with Parliamentarians from countries that are not threatened and men from countries that are, who, if the will of our enemies becomes law, will now for the last time meet Germans as Germans, I am conscious of being one with you in spirit at this sad and solemn hour when we have only one command to obey: We must hold together. We must stick together. We are one flesh and one blood, and he who tries to separate us cuts with a murderous knife into the live flesh of the German people. To preserve the life of our people is our highest duty.

"We are chasing no nationalistic phantoms; no question of prestige and no thirst of power have any part or lot in our deliberations. For country and people we must save life—a bare, poor life now, when everyone feels the throttling hand on his throat. Let me speak without mincing my words; what lies at the root of our deliberations is this thick book [pointing to the Peace Terms], in which hundreds of paragraphs begin with 'Germany renounces—renounces—renounces'—this *malleus maleficarum* by which the confession of our own unworthiness, the consent to our own merciless dismember-

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

ment, the agreement to our enslavement and bondage, are to be wrung and extorted from a great people—this book shall not be our law manual for the future!”

Then followed comparisons of the dictated Peace with Wilson's fourteen points, and a description of the devastating effect of the Treaty for Germany in home and foreign policy.

Then I continued:

“I ask you: who can, as an honest man, I will not say as a German, but only as an honest, straightforward man, accept such terms? What hand would not wither that binds itself and us in these fetters?” (Great applause.) “And now I've said enough, more than enough. We have made counter proposals; we shall make others. We see, with your approval, that our sacred duty lies in negotiation. This Treaty, in the opinion of the Government, cannot be accepted.” (Tumultuous cheering, lasting for minutes in the Hall and galleries. The meeting rises.)

President: “I ask you to allow the speaker to continue his speech.”

Scheidemann, the Prime Minister: “This Treaty is so impossible that I cannot yet realize the world containing such a book without millions and trillions of throats in all lands and of all parties yelling out: ‘Away with this organized murder.’”

My speech ended with these words:

“We have done with fighting; we want peace. We behold in horror from the example of our enemies what convulsions a policy of force and brutal militarism have caused. With a shudder we turn our heads away from these long years of murder.

“Yes, we do. Woe to them who have conjured up the War. But threefold woe to them who postpone a real peace for a single day.”

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Vociferous cheers and clapping of hands followed, as per the shorthand report.

For the Social Democratic Party Hermann Müller declared that the Treaty in its present form could not be accepted. Groeber said on behalf of the Centre: "We reject it." Konrad Haussmann said the same for the Democrats. Stresemann spoke for the German People's Party: "This offer is a mixed grill of French vengeance and English brutality." Haase for the Independents criticized the Treaty, but did not say it was impossible. On the other hand, his Party forthwith organized protest meetings against the no of the National Assembly. It was a bad blow for the policy of the Government that was not unanimous against the Treaty. The S.P.D. replied to the demonstrations of the Independents with a powerful manifesto against a treaty by force, and I added: "In the present Government no one is sitting who would be so dishonest as to promise what he knows he cannot keep. . . . We want peace, and we want it based on Wilson's points; we are ready to treat. Our whole endeavour is directed to making smooth the path to negotiations that must not deviate from what may really bring peace to the world."

I believe the conduct of no politician could have been more consistent from the very start to the bitter end.

Ebert, with whom I naturally kept in close touch during these days, declared himself in perfect sympathy with my point of view. Even to foreign friends he asserted that the Treaty could in no circumstances be accepted if it were not materially improved. He also stated it publicly. I had advised him to be as definite in his language as I was forced to be as Prime Minister and was able to be on the strength of my convictions. Ebert was mortally offended, and as-

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

sured me that he was just as determined as I was to say no. Next day he stood on the balcony in the Wilhelmstrasse and declared to the crowd assembled: "We will not sign this Treaty, no matter what may happen." This scene appeared in the illustrated papers together with his speech. As Ebert knew that our foreign representatives in Sweden, Denmark, Holland and Switzerland definitely expected the Treaty to be turned down, I pictured to myself the grave difficulties that would arise if Ebert really said no and resigned. I had told him and others of my friends officially that I would in no circumstances sign the Treaty, not even if the Party should object. The Party could get anybody to sign they liked; my name would not appear under any treaty in which we clearly said that the enemy could do with us whatsoever they liked because we were the scum of the earth—Germans.

The Split in the Cabinet

My faith in the absolute firmness of the men in the Cabinet was shaken when I noticed that Erzberger's behaviour had altered, and that he was now button-holing Ebert every day. A Hamburg business man who during the War did certain business for the Imperial Government in Scandinavia and enjoyed universal respect was in the habit of visiting Government offices during the Revolution. I had not seen him for many months, when one day he called on me in the Chancery to "warn" me: "Intrigues are going on against you." I asked him if he had ever known any men in office at No. 77 Wilhelmstrasse who had not been intrigued against. "You must take the thing seriously." After a lengthy conversation he came out with this disclosure: "Krüger"—who was then Director of the Office of the Reichs-President—"told me distinctly: 'We are getting rid of Scheidemann directly the peace

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

question is decided. He certainly won't sign.' ” On my saying to the Hamburger that it was no intrigue, but a fact, my friend replied: “Don't make any mistake. To be quite frank, you are not docile enough.”

All efforts to negotiate with the Entente were useless. Clémenceau stopped some of his diatribes; otherwise there was no response—none. “Eat, bird, or die—sign, you Boches, or we'll advance.”

There were lively scenes among the Ministers over the peace terms. Erzberger, after a very hot argument with me in private, drew up a memorandum setting out what he thought would be the consequences for Germany in case of assent or dissent. On 3rd and 4th June it was discussed in the Cabinet. I wrote this in my diary at the time:

“ . . . I am aching in every limb. Can I not envisage the frightfulness of the crisis which our people may experience if we say no? Are Erzberger, Noske and David politically so very much cleverer than I, and more far-sighted? Yet if it must be—which I still deny—yes, most strongly deny, after the talk in the Cabinet in which Ebert and the Prussians took part—must we say yes, who sat in the Cabinet and have already said no to everybody.

“ ‘Our people is nationally so broken that we must sign. Our people is morally and nationally so broken’—Noske said this three times yesterday. And the leader in this retreat was Erzberger, who will not hear any argument against it. No one else spoke in favour of acceptance. The Democrats, Gothein, Dernburg and Preuss were for refusing; Giesberts (Centre) was very downright and could not reconcile acceptance with various points of honour.

“I was the first of our Social Democrats to justify his negative standpoint. I abstained from using big words, but said

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

clearly that I would not in any circumstances contradict what I had stated publicly and in any way as Head of the Cabinet."

I had, as Prime Minister, stated that every Minister should naturally decide finally according to his conscience what was in the best interests of the country; any personal considerations were to be ruled out. I had repeatedly stated publicly, and the other gentlemen as well, that we could not sign this Treaty. Yet I thought it probable that the Government would have to yield to *force majeure* and ultimately say yes. "I will not do it. My view is that we should tell the Entente quite frankly and honestly: 'What you ask from us cannot be fulfilled. If you won't see it, then come and try your luck in Berlin. Do not think we can be your bum-bailiffs and hangmen among our own people.' The Treaty is—even if important concessions are made—impracticable. It means therefore for me a scrap of paper, on which I will not write my name."

Bauer, who believed in Ebert's undoubted firmness, struck a highly patriotic note, and was dead against signing; so was Giesberts, the Postmaster-General. Ebert spoke after them. In 1921 I published the following notes from my diary: "He has been true to himself. He declares acceptance impossible. As a conscientious man he singles out a few especially scandalous conditions and analyzes some that are absolutely impossible. He stands by what he has said many times before, even in public." Landsberg, whose pitiless logic always filled me with admiration, cut the *monstrum horrendum* to rags and said: "If we see the impossibility of carrying out the Treaty, we cannot as honest men sign it." Wissell: "No." For the Prussian Government its President, Paul Hirsch, demanded its rejection.

Dr. David, who wrote the section "The National Assembly

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

at Weimar and its Work" in the book, "Ebert and his Times" (Dr. Glas & Co., Charlottenburg), says there: "They could not convince each other. The two evils, one of which one must choose, were unfortunately so terrific and of such immeasurable consequence for the destiny of the German people; one seemed as bad as the other. Whatever they decided, they knew that any decision would lead to ruin."

The Peace delegates returned from Versailles to Weimar on 17th June. The most important concession was that Upper Silesia should not be given over unconditionally to the Poles; a future referendum should decide. Count Brockdorff-Rantzau reported to the Government on behalf of the delegates on 18th June. He asked for the rejection of the Treaty as being intolerable and impracticable. "There is no one in Germany who considers the Peace proposed to us can be carried out. In our eyes honesty is the best policy. This precept does not admit of our accepting impossible obligations." In the last sentence it says: "If our enemies intend using force against us, we can be sure that the peaceable course of the world will soon set up for us an impartial tribunal, before which we shall plead for our rights."

The pros and cons were debated from late at night till three o'clock in the morning. It was out of the question that one side would persuade the other. I heartily agreed with Landsberg, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau and the Democratic members of the Cabinet. Why continue this quibbling that could lead to nothing? I cried off this cruel game by going to Ebert and tendering my resignation. On Ebert asking Landsberg and me privately whom he should appoint as Prime Minister, Landsberg made a proposal which Ebert flatly declined. My successor was Bauer, who was wholly devoted to the Reichs-President. Hermann Müller became For-

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

eign Secretary. In Bauer's place Schlicke became Minister of Labour. The new Cabinet, now consisting of members of the Centre and the S.P.D., made frantic efforts to get concessions here and there and also tried to amend certain reservations. Clémenceau brutally put a stop to this by saying: "You have only twenty-four hours to decide. The time allowed for discussion is past. Either—yes or no."

When Landsberg and Stampfer, who had also resigned his post as Chief Editor of the *Vorwärts*, left Weimar with me on Sunday, 22nd June, the bells were ringing to call the faithful to prayer. The People's Representatives were flocking to the National Assembly. There they decided by 237 votes to 138 to sign the peace proposals. Five members abstained from voting.

A Minority Declaration

On the same day the *Vorwärts* published the following statement:

"We, the undersigned members of the Social Democratic Section of the legislative National Assembly, are convinced, like the majority of the Section, that the acceptance of the enforced Peace offered by the Entente is harmful to the well-being of the Empire and the working-classes, as well as the peace of the world.

"We therefore refuse our assent to this Treaty. Though respecting the reasons which have guided the decision of the majority, we intend to ignore them, in the interests of the Party's independence, and dissent from the vote given by the Section in the National Assembly.

"Wolfgang Heine, M. Quarck, Adolf Braun, Georg Schöpflin, Voigt, Michael Hierl, Th. Wolff, Hoffman (Palatinate), Fischer (Berlin), Ad. Thiele, Th. Katzner, Otto Landsberg."

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

The question has been often discussed whether the assent given at Weimar was right or whether no would not have been the best answer. Such discussions are of doubtful value. What assent has brought us we know—we have all experienced it. What consequences dissent would have had, we do not know. One instance of the utter ignorance or unscrupulousness of agitators on the Right, I will give: I was abused in the bitterest way, and still am, because I should have signed the Peace Treaty! I was the black sheep.

To further their political interests, German Nationals and the People's Party, to say nothing of Ludendorff's supporters, made the most scandalous charges against the Parties who finally approved of the signing. This is contemptible. It is so obvious that in these critical hours every member of Parliament strove conscientiously to protect the interests of the Fatherland, and among decent men nothing need be said. As men and women of the consenting Parties knew well their political opponents, they asked these for a public expression of their views, by which it had to be clearly stated that yes was as patriotic an answer as no. Schultz-Bromberg made such a statement for the German Nationals, Dr. Heinze for the People's Party, Dr. Schiffer for the Democrats. The President of the National Assembly, Fehrenbach of the Centre, declared after these statements that "all parts of the House, both ayes and noes, were only guided in their voting by patriotic motives and inspired by high conscientiousness and the most serious appreciation of the position of our Fatherland." He then added: "It would be the worst thing in the world if any doubts should be entertained of the feelings of the nation—even of those who thought not as others. It would be an outrage to suppose that the German people could commit a crime like that."

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

The greatest difficulties prior to deciding in favour of the Treaty did not arise from the National Assembly. The Army Associations officially declared through their officers that they would oppose the Government—at any rate would refuse to serve if the dictated Peace containing such outrageous conditions (surrender of William II. and many officers) were accepted. The Communists and their adherents threatened to revolt if the Treaty were declined. Generals von Hindenburg and Groener frankly admitted, when asked by the Government, that no serious resistance could be offered. If such were not the case why had they asked for an armistice and peace? Hindenburg supplemented his opinion with the words that he, as a soldier, would prefer utter ruin to a disgraceful peace. This was the soldier's point of view, who was ready to give his own life, not the politician's point of view, who was responsible for the life of the entire people and had to try to keep them together. The General Field-Marshal had forgotten his telegram to Erzberger about signing Foch's Armistice terms when he made the above remark.

On the top of all these unheard-of difficulties came many others. The people were without clothing, underlinen, boots and shoes and—bread. The people must go on starving. "Sign! Then there'll be bread"—that was the hope of millions. Many hundreds of thousands racked with worry had their kith and kin in foreign prison camps. We were required to return our prisoners of war at once, but when would our fathers, brothers and sons who had been captured be released from bondage? No one knew, but all knew that they were badly treated, especially in France, and were badly fed. Unforgettable will the letter be that the women workers from St. Etienne du Rouvray near Rouen (Seine-Inférieure) wrote to the German Peace Committee on 15th February, 1919:

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

"Excuse us if we, the wives of those called up, take the liberty of writing to you. We should like to tell you what is going on in our town of St. Etienne. The German prisoners who are working on the railway are treated like convicts. They are beaten like dogs and badly fed; it breaks the hearts of us, wives and mothers of those called up. For we see that these men are dying of hunger. Though we are short of bread ourselves we can but throw them some bread from time to time when we get the chance. They pounce upon it like hungry beasts. . . . We hope you will take steps in this matter. . . ."

The "beast in man" comes always to the fore in war; French officials at any rate would have done well not to use the word Boches. What the German people and the German prisoners had to put up with was unspeakable. The more vividly one remembers the experiences of this terrible time, the more evident becomes the fact that war is a crime, and the clearer the fault of Governments whose political wisdom is summed up in this sentence: "If you want peace, prepare for war—*si vis pacem, para bellum!*" And so all of them prepared for war. In whatever way the responsibility for the outbreak of war is eventually determined and distributed, however great the share that will be assigned to the Imperial German Government (certainly not exclusively), the vast majority of the German people have had no part or lot in this frightful crime.

My attitude to the signing of the Peace, that was completed by the names of Bell of the Centre and of Müller Franken of the S.D. Party, was clearly defined in my speech for the Session on 7th October, 1919, in the National Assembly. The signing is an accomplished fact in the history of the world. One cannot argue against past history.

XI

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE SECTION

AT my own request I was granted a few weeks leave from the Section. Loebe thanked me most heartily for the work I had done for the Party in a difficult and most responsible position in recent years and months. I was off to Switzerland. At the frontier I avoided being arrested by independent "Radicals" by a stroke of good luck. In a South Baden newspaper, then run by Independents, their agent Thiergärtner announced that, aided by motor cyclists, he had made an attempt—unfortunately in vain—to collar me before I crossed the frontier, with the object of bringing me before a court at Lörrach. The intention was to call me to account for my political behaviour. The cyclists had just reached the frontier when the Swiss frontier barrier was lowered behind me. I only learnt later of this unsuccessful stunt through this paper and the Swiss frontier guard.

In Switzerland

On the railway journey to Zürich I was alone in a carriage with an unknown gentleman who, however, recognized me. The stranger had got out at a biggish station to buy the latest newspapers. After a few minutes he handed me, without saying a word, a Zürich paper, which reported the quarrels Noske had had with the officers of the Reichswehr in Weimar after my retirement. The travail of mankind got hold upon me. I saw the luckless German people, in all its misery and without defence, before my eyes. Since my youth I have certainly

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

not shed a tear; now I was so affected that my *vis-à-vis* quitted the carriage, leaving me alone. When he and I went out of the station at Zürich he shook hands with me heartily, though we had not exchanged a single word throughout the journey.

With a friend who was very keen on cheering me up I arrived on the Rigi on 28th June. The fire was crackling in the grate. We got close to it, for it was piercingly cold up here. "Lassalle sat here too," said my friend casually. "Oh, how many have already sat here!" "Tartarin too!" The attempt to change the conversation failed. In other circumstances I should have had a hearty laugh on being reminded of the brave Southerner. But now—it put my thoughts on the right track! Tartarin—Tarascon—Provence—Paris—Versailles!

To-day the Treaty was to be signed. I suffered the tortures of the damned.—Perhaps now at this time, at this very minute, Hermann Müller was sitting down to the table at Versailles to put his good name to an infamous document. And Clémenceau and all the rest of the "winners" were eagerly watching his hands. Will he sign or will he throw the inkpot into the faces of these hateful fellows?

I quickly recovered in Switzerland, and soon could write letters to Weimar. Now, far from the sound of the guns, I felt and saw things in a different light than I should have done in Weimar. The Committee sitting on the Constitution was meanwhile hard at work. Was its obsequiousness to the Centre right? Wasn't its giving away in the Education question a mistake? I informed them in Weimar of my misgivings, but to no purpose. One of Ebert's sincere admirers, most closely connected with Government circles, wrote me bitterly

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SECTION

complaining: a painful tendency to play for one's own hand was going on, which my successor could not stop. Serious differences of opinion between Ebert and myself on the duties of a Reichs-President had occurred both in Berlin and Weimar. I must mention this. To give one example: One day Ebert sent me a proposal for the Budget that concerned the office of the Reichs-President. He asked me to get it through as quickly as I could. His request, as far as the personal question was concerned, was at the time impracticable and also unjustified.

What Ebert wanted was, roughly speaking, a wholly independent chancery with a large staff. I discussed the proposal privately with a few colleagues who thoroughly agreed with me. On my representing my doubts from a practical standpoint, he said his Under-Secretary was responsible for the proposal; it concerned the Secretary's private work. Baake emphatically denied this, saying that the idea arose from his chief's own suggestions, and had been discussed daily for hours before being handed over to me. Baake also told me that in no circumstances would he remain in his job. The matter only served to increase Ebert's natural irritability.

The political influence which Ebert invariably exercised was greater than it seemed from outside. Owing to his bustling energy he had his share of vexations, and his caustic remarks, *e.g.* "I have finished with Rathenau and his gang," gave offence. After the signing of the Rapallo Treaty he would have nothing further to do with Rathenau and Wirth. Rathenau and Wirth had ideas widely different from his on the constitutional privileges of a Reichs-President. Dr. Wirth, in his fine book, "Ebert and His Times," has stated that he at first would never speak his mind.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Braun, the Prime Minister, had repeatedly declared the change in the Flag, proposed by the Reichs-President, inadmissible, and a great move to the Right. Later, on 7th September, 1927, at a public meeting in Hamburg, after a long article had appeared in the *Vorwärts*, Braun said: "I know that a black-white-red War Flag exists, though the Constitution of the country only recognizes the black-red-gold National Ensign and the black-white Trade Flag with the jack; the former—I have no doubt on the subject—is illegal." That many official acts, which were probably forced on Ebert, were often misunderstood in S.D. circles, was conspicuously illustrated by a motion presented at the Party Conference in Berlin in 1924 proposing to exclude him from the Party, as the Saddlers' Union had already done. I most vigorously opposed the proposer and seconder at this meeting:

"I am disgusted to hear of these proposals with regard to Ebert. Have you who make this proposal for censuring Ebert and kicking him out of the Party no sense of decency? [Continuous applause and handclapping.] He has certainly made mistakes. Who would agree with all he has guaranteed under the Constitution in his own name? [Hear, hear.] All this has been as much against his grain as ours. I entreat you not to play the fool, but to hold your tongues."

President von Hindenburg's political correspondence has been indulgently considered, perhaps because his supporters could point to the political activity of his predecessor. In referring to Ebert's work, the evil days in which he accepted office and did his duty must not be forgotten.

We Social Democrats have not the slightest reason for strengthening the powers of the Reichs-President—whether he be a Social Democrat or a man who has different views

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SECTION

from us. It is very natural for reactionary parties to want to increase the powers of the President. Our task is to increase the power of Parliament, not the President's.

Differences of Opinion

My Kassel friends wanted me to address them on my way back from Switzerland to Berlin. I consented. Meanwhile the Press reported that the officer commanding the Berlin troops, Colonel Reinhardt—not to be confused with the later Minister of War and General of the Army of Defence—had called the Government before all his men a pack of rascals. Nothing was said about dismissing this officer. I naturally alluded to the incident in my speech at Kassel, and regretted that Reinhardt's dismissal was so long in coming. On reaching Berlin next morning I saw that my speech had been published in the papers in extracts by the W.T.B. (Wolf's Telegraphic Agency). I had barely reached my house when Ebert asked me on the 'phone to come and see him at once to blow me up for what I had said in my speech. Closely following on this I had a talk with Noske. Both had undoubtedly discussed my grave insubordination, for both were hot in their condemnation, and their comments were identical: "Do you intend to trip us up? We shall not think of dismissing so capable an officer." I was in the presence of two sphinxes.

Next day, when I had a second interview with the Reichs-President in the presence of Dr. Helphand, a good friend of Ebert's, the latter said in so many words: "You must take into account that Reinhardt did not think his words to the troops would be reported in the newspapers." We were both nonplussed. The more we tried to get Ebert to see how absurd all this was in the interests of the Government and the safety of the Republic, the more angry he became. On my remark-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

ing what a good effect it would have on all anti-Republican officers if Reinhardt were sacked, Ebert snapped out: "I shall not think of doing so." Off we went. I clearly saw the enormous difficulties I should have with the Party leaders. As Chairman of the S.P.D. I was naturally forced to speak in public and write to the papers. Ebert soon after sent for me to tell me definitely that before I said or wrote anything publicly I was always to consult him. To this I could not possibly consent, though I said I was ready to discuss with him any question which might be disputed in the Section.

The Executive after a time found itself compelled to send in a memorandum to the S.D. Ministers in which all sorts of grievances were stated. It referred to incidents in the Reichswehr, and called attention to the grave dangers of the Republic and the increasing dissatisfaction in the Party. At the end it remarked: "Discontent is increasing. Since Comrade Heine, a present Minister, has taken to criticizing publicly, it will be quite impossible to restrain other comrades, who are not in his position, from doing likewise."

The petition was signed by Wels, then Secretary of the Party Executive, and me. From Bauer's indignant protest against the petition it was easy to see how angry Ebert was about it.

When, shortly after, Ebert and I had a talk together similar to the above, we discussed things quite frankly, and were friends and comrades once more. I said to him during it: "You are so used to running the Party that you might do it now, but do not forget that the Party Chairman is not your Chancellor. In any case, I am not fitted in any way for the part of a passive editor." It was perfectly clear that in a very short time further and more serious rumpuses would be inevitable.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SECTION

Out of affection for the Party, and to avoid any unpleasantness, after a deputation of my Kassel friends approached me a third time with the view of getting me to return to my native town and take over the office of mayor, I accepted this position.

The Enemy on the Right

On 8th October, 1919, I spoke on behalf of the S.D. Section in the National Assembly on the Budget. As in my speech at Kassel, I pointed out the grave danger that was threatening the Republic from the Right. The Government must make a stand against the Right. I said in the National Assembly: "Anyone who voluntarily wears the uniform of an officer of the Republic shall abstain from provocative language and provocative actions against the Republic. If he is unable to do so, he proves that he does not know his duty and that his notions of honour are suspect." I also expressed the hope that Noske's great energy would be successful in this direction. "Royalist officers who wildly abuse the Republican Government before their men are altogether out of place in the Defence Force."

The Reinhardt case was hotly discussed in the Press and at meetings. The Left agreed with me on the whole. The Right extolled Reinhardt's extraordinary merits as the saviour of Berlin. This exaggerated estimate is certainly not borne out by Noske in his book, "From Kiel to Kapp," though Reinhardt did good service in restoring order.

In a speech I made in the National Assembly on 7th October, 1919, I uttered this warning to the Government: "The enemy is on the Right." Under this title my speeches both at Kassel and in the National Assembly were published in pamphlet form by the firm of "Sozialwissenschaft," and according to a return from the firm 200,000 copies were sold. On the words "The

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

enemy is on the Right," I wrote several articles, etc., for the *Vorwärts* and made numerous speeches at meetings. Dr. Wirth, almost three years later, after Rathenau's murder, used the same words in a speech in the Reichstag, and they have been added by Büchmann to his "Geflügelte Worte" (Winged Words). Their origin is not disputed.

XII

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

THE revolt of 13th March, 1920, against the Ebert-Bauer-Noske Government has up to now been alluded to as the Kapp-Putsch. Future historians will couple Ludendorff along with Kapp, for there is no doubt that Ludendorff had his clumsy fingers in the pie from the start. Perhaps this is why the stunt so quickly came to grief. The rebels had plenty of material for agitating against the Republic and its Government. The misery that a devastating war lasting more than fifty months had brought upon Germany naturally could not be removed in fifty weeks. The number of malcontents was enormous, and it was an easy matter to incite them against the Government. The leaders of the Right, who, quaking with fear, had at first kept as quiet as mice, gradually came out of their holes. They were quickly able to get in touch with the Reichswehr, for the discontent among the soldiers, especially among the officers, owing to the Treaty of Versailles, was as great as among the hungry millions of the working population; while the latter were a good recruiting ground for the Communists, many officers and officials went over to reactionary cliques. The class who had best understood the national necessities were the workers, who had been trained by their unions and the S.P.D. The work of education among the Social Democrats that had been carried on for years before the War in an ideal way, with considerable self-sacrifice, had borne excellent fruit. Had it not been for this Social Demo-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

cratic work Germany would have fallen a hopeless victim to Bolshevism.

In accordance with the Treaty of Versailles the Army had to be reduced to a definite figure within a fixed time limit. This enforcement had disastrous effects. Besides the men already dismissed at the beginning of March, another batch of 50,000 had to be demobilized by 10th April. The temper of the Army had been embittered also by an agitation in which Ludendorff, the man who had done most to lose the War, was deeply involved. The accusation that the troops had been badly fed, clothed and paid, originated with him, and as a matter of fact puts the finishing touch to Ludendorff's character sketch. All kinds of "patriotic" associations sprang up. In the National United Movement a "Cave of Adullam" was formed in which all these associations could take refuge. The soldiers were incited to revolt, the cliques of the Right exasperated and then consoled by mysterious allusions to better times coming. The Coalition Government was made responsible for the consequences of the loss of the War, and a wild campaign of misrepresentation began, with the object of exciting mistrust against well-known Republicans and the Republic itself.

Former Imperial Officers had, without exception, taken service with the Defence Force. Officers intending to conform to the new régime, because they had been taught wisdom through the collapse, were scouted by their comrades and regarded with suspicion by the authorities concerned. Noske's attitude to the officers was to me unintelligible, but he could not be dissuaded from it. He stuck to the theory that an Imperial officer who made no attempt at disguising his Royalist sympathies was more acceptable to him than an officer who fancied himself a Republican. He went on the assumption

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

that Imperial officers had loyally accepted service under the Republic. This assumption was certainly no better founded than the other, viz. that the scales had fallen from the eyes of many officers in the course of the War, and especially after the flight of the Supreme War Lord. There were at Headquarters on 9th November not only officers who, according to Bauer, distinctly asserted that they must now go to school again, but there were also officers who had already gone there before 9th November.

It became more and more apparent that the enemy was on the Right. He was unfortunately not only on the Right, as I said in the Reichstag in October, 1919. The Communists' behaviour was perfectly idiotic, and facilitated the policy of the reactionaries. They had failed to convert the Republic in 1920 into a Soviet because the rest of the population was against them. The real danger menaced from the Right and the blunder committed in the Reinhardt affair could not be rectified. The officers, Reinhardt, Ehrhardt and Lüttwitz were feeling their way, and they had swollen heads. How could they have any respect for the gang now in the Government? General von Lüttwitz, instead of obeying orders, resisted the further reductions in the number of officers and men. Would he have taken it lying down in 1920 had they sacked Colonel Reinhardt on the spot in September, 1919? I repeatedly tried to influence Ebert. On 20th February I wrote him a note of warning from Kassel:

"DEAR FRITZ,

"... The German Nationalists are now raging against the Government worse than the Spartacists. How insolently they are behaving the enclosed leaflet will tell you. People do not understand, as I hear from all sides, why the Independent

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

Socialist papers are shut down for attacking the Government; many of the I.S. organs are quite harmless compared with such leaflets as the one enclosed. Much closer attention than hitherto must be given to the activities of the German Nationals, if we do not want to have very sad experiences. Steps should most certainly have been taken against the German National newspapers before proceeding against those of the Extreme Left. Perhaps you will speak with our Cabinet colleagues on the subject. . . .”

When, a few days later, the Government Commissary, von Berger, drew the Government's attention in a memorandum to the activities of the Right, it was too late to frustrate a carefully prepared attack. Noske at his own request was called in to consult with the Reichs-President. A few days before the “Putsch,” General von Lüttwitz, with Generals von Oldershausen and von Oven, called on the Reichs-President to state his demands. Lüttwitz, in full agreement with Kapp's programme, and his accomplices, Bredereck, Papst and the rest of them, demanded a Parliamentary election, the choosing of the Reichs-President by the people and the appointment of experts as Ministers.

If Noske and Ebert had been in any way sure of the Reichswehr, they would now have sent General von Lüttwitz about his business. But they were not sure of the “loyal” officers, and accordingly listened to the rebel General. On the evening of 12th March, Noske, as he says in his book, had no definite information of any sort of plot. He sent an officer to Döberitz to find out whether anything unusual was happening there. As this officer, Admiral von Trotha, had announced his visit to Döberitz by telephone, he naturally saw nothing out of the way. When finally the preliminaries for a mutiny

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

became unmistakable—Captain Ehrhardt had sent an ultimatum to the Government—Noske mustered a number of superior officers, to whom he explained what the consequences of a mutiny would be. His order to lead their troops against the mutineers only found favour with two officers; all the others raised objections: "The fight would only lead to frightful bloodshed and end in the defeat of the Berlin soldiers, which were too few. The success of the rebels would be a certainty." The same night, 12th to 13th March, the Reichs-Government and the Reichs-President fled, first to Dresden and, as their safety could not be guaranteed, from there to Stuttgart.

The Kapp-Putsch in the Provinces

In the provinces the first sign of life in the "new Government" was this notice:

"The former Government of the Empire has ceased to exist. The whole authority of the State has passed to the undersigned Provincial Governor Kapp (Königsberg) as Imperial Chancellor and Prussian Prime Minister. General Lüttwitz has been appointed by the Imperial Chancellor Commander-in-Chief and Minister of Defence. A new Government of order, freedom and action is being formed

"KAPP, *Imperial Chancellor.*

"VON LÜTTWITZ, GENERAL (*Infantry*)."

At the same time the National Assembly and the Prussian Assembly were declared dissolved.

Events in Berlin immediately before the "Putsch" and the flight of the Government to Stuttgart are generally known. On the other hand, events in the provinces are very obscure.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

That the Reichswehr was in no way staunch in its support of the existing Government was clear by its conduct in Kassel. The tactics of the Reichswehr reminded one of the behaviour of the police in Berlin, who in the critical days after the collapse declared their neutrality, with the object of coming in on the winning side.

On 13th March, 1920, I wrote in my diary in Kassel: "The 'bang up' occurred earlier than I expected. I knew it would come as sure as fate. Hence my frequent articles in recent weeks on the Reaction, and their subject, 'Reaction in the Reich,' I was to speak about at a popular meeting on 16th March."

With two confidential agents of the S.D. Workers' Union I went off to see the Lord President Schwander on 13th March to talk over the situation with him. He had unfortunately decreed a strict "state of siege" with the consent of the Reichswehr Corps. The paper of the Independents was prohibited, although the agitation came entirely from the Right. He told us about his conversation with Major v. d. Bussche: "We are both of opinion that the voting paper must ultimately decide this matter." Whereupon I intervened, and said that the voting paper had already decided in January, 1919. My two comrades insisted on a savage onslaught being made on the Lord President directly the Government came back to Berlin. I had difficulty in pacifying them.

Schwander suppressed a manifesto which I wanted to publish, as a member of the National Assembly, to the working population, exhorting them to preserve the strictest discipline, in case their responsible leaders should call upon them—a hint at a General Strike, which was to be expected. He agreed with it, it is true, on principle, but required the addition of a reactionary democratic chairman from the Citizens' Party and

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

Major v. d. Bussche. Owing to these experiences I now proceeded to act alone, knowing that I was acting as my friends would have me act. My active policy outside my province was always adversely criticized by many bureaucrats. A tribute to a dead man must here be paid: the late Lord President Springorum, an old Prussian official, acted splendidly. At the first news of the "Putsch" he telegraphed at once to all his subordinate magistrates that they should stand by the Ebert-Bauer Government without any hesitation. That there was plenty of work to do for official Republicans can clearly be seen from the following broadsheet, from which one can see what the Reichswehr might have done:

"SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT OF THE KASSEL 'VOLKSBLATT'

*"Scheidemann to the
Reichswehr-Brigade Commando II.*

"Scheidemann, member of the Reichstag, despatched the following letter on Sunday forenoon to the Reichswehr-Brigade Commando II, under the command of His Excellency von Schöler.

*"Kassel,
"14th March, 1920.*

"The German National *Casseler Allgemeine Zeitung*, published on the evening of the 13th inst. an Extra, beginning thus:

"We have received the following from the Reichswehr-Brigade Commando II: 'In Berlin a new Labour Government has been formed under the Provincial Governor Kapp as Chancellor. Only specialists have been appointed as Ministers. All Parties have been called upon without exception to form the new Government. The change of Government has been accomplished without bloodshed and in the best order. . . .'

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

"If this news from the paper above mentioned is not false, and the Reichswehr Commando has actually published the announcement, I, as member of the National Assembly for the district of Kassel-Frankfort on Main, protest strongly against it, in common with many thousands of my electors. The announcement cannot fail to be regarded by the population as a Party move in favour of mutinous soldiers who have revolted against the Government of the Reich.

"The Government of the Reich under the President Ebert and the Chancellor Bauer has been formed according to law, according to the statutes of the Constitution of the Reich. The Constitution of the Reich has been settled and decreed according to law by the German legislative National Assembly. The troops of the Reichswehr and their officers have been sworn in in accordance with the German Constitution. Soldiers who are supporting Herr Kapp are breaking their oath. The Government Ebert-Bauer is the legally constituted Government of the Reich that has been temporarily overpowered by unscrupulous individuals, and there can now only be one paramount duty for the Reichswehr—to protect this legally constituted and rightful Government. In the hope that Your Excellency will be able to condemn as untrue the announcement in the *Casseler Allgemeine Zeitung*,

"I sign myself,

"SCHEIDEMANN,

"Member of the National Assembly.

*"To the Reichswehr Brigade Commando,
under the command of His
Excellency Lieut.-General
von Schöler."*

Shortly after receiving this letter Herr von Schöler sent to

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

Scheidemann, member of the Reichstag, by an officer, a message that did not answer the important question. It is therefore true that the Reichswehr Brigade Commando did mention a "new Labour Government," as reported in the *Casseler Allgemeine Zeitung*.

A "new Government" does not exist. The new Government consists of mutineers. Anyone declaring himself on the side of these mutineers is a traitor and a betrayer of his country, whether he be a soldier, official, citizen or peasant. He who means to protect our people from frightful disaster at home, preserve it from new reprisals by the Entente and rescue it from being broken up and from permanent impoverishment, let that man take his stand by the side of the Ebert-Bauer Government!

The General's answer could only be shortly mentioned in the leaflet, because it was very difficult on a Sunday to get it printed. The first sentence of the letter ran thus: "The Reichswehr Brigade Commando in Kassel that is in military authority over the West of Germany takes the view that the Constitution must be protected. It has given no support to the new Government that has been established by rebels in Berlin, but adheres to the old Government set up according to the Constitution. . . ." Then followed objections to the declaration of a General Strike. The final sentence ran: "Civil war, and Germany's ruin in consequence, must be unconditionally avoided." The letter was handed to me in the street by an officer. To the question as to whether the Reichswehr Brigade Commando had sent in this announcement to the German National organ, the Reichswehr gave no answer; that was clear enough. The announcement about the "new Government" came, as a matter of fact, from the Reichswehr Brigade Commando. The quick change of front was probably

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

solely due to my leaflets; at any rate the Reichswehr in the meantime began to have its doubts of the absolute certainty of the Kapp-Putsch; perhaps it was not unaware that the Kassel Workers' Union was ready to a man to resist it. A mutinous Reichswehr would have had the shock of its life in March, 1920, at Kassel.

The Communists at this time were behaving in a reckless way in Kassel. At first, so it was said, they were utterly indifferent about who "ran" this Republic. Then, when the Kapp-Putsch was quelled through the General Strike which was joined in Kassel by Social Democrats, Democrats and the Centre, and the order given to resume work, the Communists started their own plan of campaign against all and sundry. They brought up a few machine-guns and threatened the Reichswehr Brigade Commando. As they were deaf to all persuasion, shooting was the unfortunate result: seventeen dead, forty-three severely and twenty-one slightly wounded. All of these were the victims of senseless words spoken by irresponsible persons.

In Stuttgart

The summoning of the National Assembly to Stuttgart was an easier matter than getting the members to follow. The General Strike was in full swing. There were no means of getting about and no trains running. Everything was quiet in Kassel. My action against the Reichswehr, so the Town Council told me, had a very pacifying effect. How was I to obey the call to Stuttgart? My friends urged me to go. "Perhaps you could get there in a town taxi?" Was there then a car in existence that could do the distance without breaking down hundreds of times? "The Fire Brigade have motors." "Good,

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

let's inquire." The head of the brigade, whom I sent for, was quite willing, he said, to drive me to Stuttgart, if tyres and petrol could be got. Town officials, good honest fellows, came to me protesting; they considered it their duty to warn me about having as a chauffeur this arch-reactionary fireman. He said he would drive me himself; and they would stop this at all costs. All this bother and an offer from a Kassel citizen to drive me to Stuttgart in his own car came to naught, as a wire from Hörsing, the Magdeburg Governor, told me that he had managed to get a special train that was running via Kassel and would take me to the National Assembly. This train called on the way, picking up all members of Parliament who could join it on the line between Kassel and Stuttgart. In Stuttgart many of the members of the National Assembly had already arrived by motor. Immediately on reaching Stuttgart I went to see Ebert, and found Bauer with him. When I asked what was wrong with Noske, Bauer replied, as Ebert had been called to the telephone, "What should be wrong with Noske? Nothing. Everything is as it was." "It is hardly possible," answered I; "the Party will be up in arms." On this Tuesday evening there was a discussion in the Section at which twenty to twenty-two colleagues were present. Loebe reported a meeting of the Cabinet that had taken place on the day before the "Putsch." We now learnt the painful fact that on the Tuesday before the "Putsch," at a time when the Section were still assembled in Berlin, Lüttwitz arrived and made his demands to the Government. This fact had not been disclosed to the Section. Loebe continued: "The Cabinet's chief worry was that the Reichswehr would be dissolved and they would have no protection against Spartacists and robbers." I will not comment on this remark. Another meeting followed on Wednesday morning. There were three times the number of

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

members present. Noske was asked to make a statement. He took up the whole of the forenoon sitting in trying to prove that what he had done in the Reichswehr was right. At the afternoon sitting I had to contradict Noske. He had failed in his dealings with the Right. There was a certain amount of opposition in the Section to my remarks, but I was unanimously chosen (the evening before I had been proposed as their speaker) to speak for the Section at the plenary sitting, though I suggested to them to choose another colleague. On Thursday morning there was another meeting of the Section. Several attacks were made on Noske, though some attempts were made to defend him. In the afternoon a remarkable meeting of the Section took place. Tremendous excitement prevailed among the members, the representatives of the Press and other listeners. I was wild at the many acts of rudeness I met with and the ridiculous secrecy I had here and there come across. Yet I spoke, from long practice, with restraint and composure. This Stuttgart speech and the one I made in the Aula of the University in Berlin I shall ever remember.

The following is taken from my speech on the Kapp-Putsch in the National Assembly at Stuttgart, on 18th March, 1920:

"Anyone who is not intentionally blind and deaf must have seen coming with disgust and indignation what we have suffered in recent days. Prussian reactionaries who have got one job after another in the Reichswehr, and found increasing support in the German National Press, have grown more and more obnoxious.

"The insolence of certain cliques has visibly waxed stronger from day to day, since Colonel Reinhardt abused the Government in the wildest talk, and yet retained his post in the Reichswehr in spite of it. Certain conditions in the Reichswehr have become more and more intolerable.

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

"The workers committed a huge blunder in not joining the Reichswehr. It was widely known that big landed proprietors were laying in supplies of arms; one knew that the students were collecting them in great quantities. Special Officers' Companies had been formed in the Reichswehr. The exclusion of the S.D. workers from the citizen guards was a very dubious move. Suspicious signs in rich profusion. I will just mention the provocative rejection of the National Colours, the contempt for the new emblems; quite openly, and encouraged in high places, shoulder-straps were again worn, that were especially a source of annoyance to our soldiers on active service. Then came the suppression of the only Republican paper in the Army and the introduction of German National organs. Anyone who could not get direct information could conclude as much from the angry alarmist protests at meetings, Parliamentary Sections and in the Press. I will not dwell further on the storm signals of reaction, but I will state this for all the world to hear—the same cliques that drove us to war, that brought misery and woe upon our people, these same cliques and individuals plotted crime against the Republic and Democracy, and have tried hard to carry it out. . . .

"Before all else the policy of the two Parties on the Right must be borne in mind. Not one of them declared for the farcical régime of Herr Kapp—by no means, although Herr Kapp is a member of the Joint Executive of the German National People's Party. The People's Party as a whole had no part or lot in it. Dr. Heinze, in a loyal fashion, took the side of the Government—as was natural. Herr Stresemann, who would once have liked so much to be an original member of the Democratic Party, and when that did not materialize turned independent, fired off his telling phrases in a manifesto which, like that of the German Nationals, contained not

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

the slightest word of disapproval of the small, harmless *coup d'état* that was brought off in Berlin. Now one thing more. The manifesto called the supposed intention of getting an alteration made in an article of the Constitution through constitutional channels "a breach of the Constitution," but the adventurous quartette—Kapp, Lüttwitz, Jagow, Brederick—is respectfully addressed as "the new Government," and exhorted to co-operate with all its might against internal strife. . . .

"I maintain:

"1. Only men on the Right were concerned in this 'Putsch'—in this crime.

"2. Not one word of condemnation for this crime came from the Parties on the Right.

"3. The assurance of loyal co-operation from the Parties on the Right.

"What did Messrs. Kapp, Ludendorff, Jagow, Traub and Brederick want? The gentlemen wanted a Presidential Election by popular vote as soon as possible. They furthermore wanted the elections before the most important work of the National Assembly was finished. The same people for whom in the past the legislative period could never be too long, wanted the non-fulfilment of the Peace Treaty, no reduction of the Reichswehr, no surrender of arms, in order to be prepared for another war. To obtain 'special' Ministers 50,000 soldiers were concentrated in Berlin, the entire Reich was brought to the brink of ruin and perhaps thousands of men would have to sacrifice their lives. For these Ministers, Kapp, Ludendorff and Brederick, had been collecting arms for months and were organizing students and officers of the Reserve. The people rises--the storm breaks--for Ministerialist Specialists!

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

Who stopped the commission of this crime against the Republic? I will say, first the troops and their leaders, who, according to their oath to the Constitution, stood loyally by the Republic. Then the official classes, who proved by an overwhelming majority that they loyally serve the Republic. We thank them heartily. . . . Our chief thanks are due to the German Workers' Unions. The words 'General Strike is General Nonsense' have now no meaning. The triumph of the General Strike over the military—we are quite clear about it—is a fact of historic importance. The victory could only have been won by a united body of workers. Workers must learn their lesson from that. . . .

"Seventy-two years ago to-day, in March, 1848, the streets of Berlin ran red with the blood of the fallen; to-day the streets of many German towns run red with the blood of those who once more fought for freedom. Hats off to them who have fought for freedom! [The whole Assembly rises.]

"We demand a thorough cleansing of the Reichswehr, the dismissal of all officers whose loyalty to the Republic is not above suspicion; we demand the disarmament of all troops who have mutinied.

"He who on account of his Royalist convictions cannot faithfully serve the Republic is to go. The Republic is poor, it is true, but it will not send empty away those Royalists who are due to retire.

"We demand the severest punishment of criminals, whether military or civil, who have attacked the Republic from the rear in such a devilish fashion, who have shaken our entire economic life and brought upon our land fresh misery, woe and death. The sharpest punishment for these criminals in the quickest possible manner, as well as the confiscation of their property. This is what we require. Foreign lands, who have

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

not shown entire confidence in our young Republic and our democracy, may see from what has happened in the last few days that we are thoroughly in earnest about our democracy and Republic.

"Unjustifiable and criminal is the use of force wherever all have absolutely the same political rights, and wherever no obstacles, not even the smallest, are placed in the way of the majority for the attainment of their objects. Where force is used to secure the upper hand for a minority it is a crime. On the other hand, the German people will know how to defend itself throughout all time. We will have no Junker tyranny. We will have no Spartacus rule, either. We will have an honest and absolute democracy. We will have it, and not last, as a means for making the paths straight that lead to Socialism. . . . And so I close with the words: 'Long live the Republic, whose corner-stone is Democracy—the Democracy that leads to Socialism.'"

Though not only cheers, but also hand clapping (this was formerly a rare occurrence), followed my speech, it was not altogether welcomed in the S.D. Section. That was seen next morning at the meeting of the Section. Nearly all S.D. members of the Government were present. Ebert spoke frequently, and reported negotiations with Legien. At dinner-time I was away for about an hour after Loebe, sitting on my right, had shown me a not very inspiring list of speakers, and Ebert on my left said he would not speak any more. There was nothing startling to be expected in the next hour. But during my absence Ebert delivered a very long speech. The Section adjourned after passing a motion requesting Noske not to retire. It was remarkable that a special vote of confidence had not been proposed. They wanted to retain our comrade, as they

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

did not know of a suitable man for his post. When I got back, after a bare hour away, the meeting was already over. I stood before closed doors. On entering the restaurant where I was going to dine with Rauscher, a telegram from the W.T.B. was handed us with this heading: "Scheidemann repudiated." I saw that my friends were in a terrible hurry to report it from the Section. While at table I received an invitation to a meeting with the Government in the Schloss, which I angrily refused. However, I did go, after Rauscher had rightly pointed out to me that it was distinctly more advisable to tell them frankly what I thought, rather than stop away and say nothing. At the Cabinet meeting, which was attended by the chairmen of the Sections attached to the Government, Ebert was reporting various things about negotiations with the Commission that had been formed under Legien's chairmanship and had put forward many forcible proposals. I had already seen, in the forenoon, from telegrams which Ebert made me read, that the first proposal was Noske's retirement. As Ebert barely noticed this point, as he had done in the morning, I put to him the reasonable question: "I ask the Reichs-President or the Chancellor whether there are any other proposals besides the ones we have had laid before us." When Ebert shook his head, I asked more definitely: "Has not Noske's retirement been requested?" Ebert replied: "An alteration in the Cabinet has been requested." Then I saw that Noske was the man meant.

The scene was extremely unpleasant, for everybody felt frank information to be impossible. Finally a mixed commission was set up to discuss things with Legien. Bauer, Giesberts and Gessler were to represent the Government, and Mehrfeld (Socialist), Brauns (Centre) and Haase (Democrat) the Parties attached to the Government.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

A Speech in the Section

Shortly after this Cabinet meeting there was a sitting of the Section, at which I rose to speak at once with the view of putting my case as clearly as I could, at the same time observing a benevolent reserve. As the Kapp-Putsch had given rise to all sorts of rumours, I will enter more into detail, in order to give later historians something to write about. During my speech in the Section there was no reporter present. With the aid of my notes I afterwards wrote out my speech almost word for word, and asked Loebe, with whom I had thoroughly discussed it, to add it to the minutes as soon as it was typed. Loebe, who was very dissatisfied with the whole affair, and especially with the conduct of the Government, was very keen on the facts being stated. He quite agreed to adding my speech to the minutes. In a letter from Kassel (24th March) I reminded him of our arrangement, and as soon as I got to Berlin I was able to convince myself that the secretary of the Section had already carried out Loebe's instructions.

I quote the following extract from my speech on 19th March, 1918, from the minute-book of the S.D. Section:

"I have been on most friendly terms for years with all the S.D. members of the Government. I trust that this state of things will not be disturbed in the future. Now one's highest duty is concerned, and duty comes before friendship. In the first place, I must lodge a complaint against the Government for not having informed the Section of what has been going on. We have heard to-day from Ebert that he had a highly important conversation with General Lüttwitz on 9th March in Noske's presence. On Friday 12th March our members went home, and on Saturday they saw in the papers what had happened in Berlin. Just imagine how Ebert and I would

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

have attacked Bethmann-Hollweg if he had kept back from us such an important piece of news during the War. And now! Ebert is silent, Bauer quotes German proverbs: 'If we had known! . . .' 'When one comes from the Council Chamber,' etc. He might just as well have said, 'Beautify your home,' or 'Bath at home.' The art of politics is to look ahead. The charge of being too late made against former Governments must in this case unfortunately be made against the present Government. With regard to Lüttwitz, Bauer said in so many words, 'We did not think it so serious at first. Rumours are always travelling round the country.' He turned to Quarck, who had expressed his astonishment at Lüttwitz not being imprisoned, and said, 'Why, Communist working men are always coming to us with their ultimatums. We do not imprison such people. How could we have imprisoned one of our most respected Generals! . . .' Just a word on my speech of yesterday (that had been criticized by some in the Faction). Though I am generally dissatisfied with my speeches in Parliament, I will not disguise the fact that I am very pleased to-day with my yesterday's speech. I am convinced that ninety per cent. of the Party are behind me and in favour of my speech. Take me for a conceited fellow if you like. I will chance it, and say this: I have the political *flair* that many seem to be without in these days. . . . I have talked about occurrences in the Reichswehr. You ought to be pleased I did so, otherwise Payer would have done it in a more forcible way than he did before, and Henke [then an Independent Socialist] would not have let a good opportunity go by. Must we always be told by others what it is our duty to say? Say what you like, I am glad to have spoken my mind. I stated nothing but facts—hard, solid facts—that we have talked over hundreds of times with Noske, Ebert, Bauer and the whole Section.

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

I recollect the discussion on the Reinhardt affair. Would not the Government now have been heartily glad if they had followed my advice at the time and sent Reinhardt to the devil? My speech in as far as it concerned the Reichswehr was nothing but an echo of what had been said in the Section by most people. Yet I entirely agree with you in opposing the motion Quessel had brought forward. Quessel, as everyone knows, proposes that the Section should demand Noske's resignation. I consider this an absolutely wrong move. We cannot go so far as to ask a colleague directly to retire. Yet—and do not think any the worse of me—the present state of things forcibly reminds me of what occurred in October, 1918, when William II. could not understand he would have to go.

“How were things discussed in the Section? None of our colleagues in the Government was present usually. When we were to hear Loebe's report on recent events the day before yesterday, Loebe asked Noske to speak. Noske took up the whole morning with his speech. And what did he tell us? Was it a clear recital of the stages of painful events? No, he tried for hours to prove that he had pursued the right line and policy in his office. He tried to explain what is now going on as the result of necessity, for which he was not answerable in any way. This is wrong. I have always judged Noske fairly. All of you know how I appreciate him. I know his merits. But now we are faced with the fact that his organization has completely broken down owing to its want of energy against the Right. Make no mistake about what people in the country think of the Reichswehr and Noske. If there is any chance of keeping him in office, we must, of course, try it. But I see no chance. I am convinced that the immense majority of the Party considers a change in the Ministry of Defence as obvious. I knew nothing of what occurred in Berlin last week. I knew

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

nothing of our comrade's meeting with Legien. And yet two days ago I made remarks that show I could see further than my nose. [I had made proposals that exactly corresponded with Legien's.] What did I say the day before yesterday, much to the horror of Stolten and others? 'Hard a-port.' Ebert has in his possession a telegram to-day from Krüger, the head of his office; the first thing in it is the demand of the Unions: Away with Noske! Why did not Ebert say that the cry 'Noske must go' had been raised?—he spoke repeatedly this morning; he also talked this afternoon in the Cabinet of the demands of the Unions. In reply to my question as to whether other demands had been made in addition to those mentioned by Ebert, the latter answered 'No.' And only when I asked directly regarding the telegram that Ebert showed me this morning, 'Has no request been made about Noske going?' Ebert answered, 'This request was previously made, but not now.' To that I replied at the Cabinet meeting, 'No name is now mentioned, because, as I see from other telegrams, changes in the Cabinet as a whole are being considered—that is to say, that the mention of Noske's going is no longer sufficient. . . .'

"To me it is quite unintelligible that we were not in the first place informed about the Berlin occurrences, and secondly that the request for Noske's retirement by the Berlin Unions was not communicated to us. It is a piece of secret diplomacy that I do not understand. We rubbed into the former Government Bethmann's words, 'Woe to the statesman who does not see the signs of the times.' And what are our friends in the Government about? They let themselves be driven hither and thither without conceding what must be conceded. The line David took two days ago—and he is here to-day—is to me a mystery; it can be put shortly by saying: 'We must as a Coalition Party consider the Centre and the Democrats. We must,

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

drat it all! . . .' But I should like to see the man who seriously disputes the fact that we must in all circumstances pay more regard to our own Party than to others. I ask you with all my heart, look things as they are in the face for our country's sake and our Party's, and hang Noske!"

The rebellion of 1920 soon collapsed, thanks to the promptness with which the working-classes put the General Strike into action. In spite of this, it is, and will always be, the most regrettable experience of the young Republic. Very bitter feelings were aroused everywhere by the flight of the Government, with the Reichs-President at its head, from Berlin, its futile knock on the gate of Dresden, and its eventual harbour of refuge in Swabia. The "Putsch" could, in my opinion, not only have been avoided (remember the interview of Lüttwitz and Co. with Ebert and Noske on 9th March), but it should have produced other results after it was suppressed. The Government was remodelled; "the Democrat" Gessler entered vice Noske. In a telegram on 23rd March from Kassel I most warmly recommend Grzesinski, later the Prussian Minister of the Interior, to the Reichs-President as Noske's successor. But to no purpose, though Grzesinski possessed the energy that should have been displayed in the Reichswehr. New elections soon took place. The property of the "Putsch"-ists was not sequestrated, though it had been solemnly and distinctly announced; on the contrary, pensions were later granted them by the Imperial judges who dispense justice under the Republic.

The Aftermath of the Kapp-Putsch

The new Elections fixed for June, 1920, were among the more decisive sequelæ of the quelling of the rebellion. To consider



IMPORTANT CONFERENCE WITH ENTENTE-SOCIALISTS AT BERLIN
ON MARCH 24, 1923

Sitting from left to right: Tom Shaw (England), Vincent Auriol (France), Matteoti (Italy), Scheidemann, Müller, Wels, Hilferding (Germany); standing from left to right: Huysman (Belgium), Breitscheid (Germany), Grumbach (France), Henke, Dittmann, Hildenbrand, Stampfer, Schiff, Crispian, Künstler (Germany).

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

their attitude, the S.P.D. summoned a National Conference for 5th May in the Great Hall of the Reichstag. I was given the office of *rapporteur*. It was expected, even by Noske himself, as clearly appeared from his speech, that I would violently attack him. It never entered my mind. What purpose would it have served? Noske, who had deserved well of the Republic, had been too trustful; he had reposed more confidence in the Imperial Officers of the Republican Defence Force than was advisable. Hence his fall. It was the logical result of circumstances which was very exhaustively discussed in the Section, in the select circle, and also in the Press after Noske's retirement. Among the most valuable statements was a conversation between Noske and Kuttner, his co-editor at Chemnitz for many years. Kuttner, who had perfect knowledge of Noske's virtues and vices, stated in the *Vorwärts* on 3rd April, 1920, that he had a talk over the telephone with Noske on 12th March immediately before the march of the mutinous troops on Berlin. In the course of this conversation Noske declared that he had not given up his former optimism. He did not believe in the excited talk of people about an imminent military catastrophe. Ehrhardt did not look like marching on Berlin; in Döberitz all was quiet, and moreover he had taken all precautions here.

Kuttner was completely flabbergasted at Noske's conduct. He says of the conversation in the *Vorwärts*:

"Six hours later Lüttwitz and Ehrhardt were masters of Berlin, Noske's military precautions came to nothing; the Government, along with the Minister of Defence, were on their way to Dresden. I believed up to now that people who think themselves on the right road, but have really lost their way, at any rate repent of their mistake when they suddenly fall into the bog. But when the optimist with the mud up

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

to his throat calls out, 'My road was absolutely the right one,' all our sympathy is dried up."

Kuttner then quoted some astounding instances of Noske's delusions, concluding his remarks with these words, "The crying reform of the Reichswehr can only be effected by a Minister of Defence, whose mind is wholly free from the influences that have involved him in errors, the seriousness of which he does not yet recognize, in spite of 13th March."

In my speech at the Conference I described the political situation. As I had naturally to talk about the Kapp-Putsch, I rounded on the reactionaries and the ultra-Radicals who, through their silly policy, had brought us into the most serious position. The Independents on the Left and the Communists had in their folly restored to reactionary officers a portion of the authority that these officers had completely lost. Without the "Putsch" in January, 1919, there would have been none in March, 1920; without a Ledebour there would have been no Lüttwitz. The "Radicals," who fondly imagine that things should have gone with us as they did in Russia, have forced us into a policy of coalition.

"It would be easier to defend the previous policy of coalition, were it not handicapped by the so-called Noske policy. I consider it my bounden duty to say here that I still value to-day Comrade Noske as a colleague, that I give him the full credit for his individuality and honest intentions which these deserve, and I should like to say here as loudly as I can: Those on the extreme Left, outside our Party, who inveigh most violently against Noske, are at least right in doing so, for they have made him what he is; they have forced him into his mistakes. It is not Noske's fault, nor is it ours, if bloody encounters did take place between various factions of the Labour movement, in which, naturally, each side accepted the help

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

offered. But it was Noske's fault and his fate that he was blind to the dangers from the Right owing to the shouts, threats and assaults from the Left. Here Noske was grievously at fault. Moral indignation must, however, vent itself on those who betrayed and abandoned this unsuspecting soul—on those officers who on the night of 12th to 13th March broke their oath, and those others who refused their help against traitors and mutineers."

I finished my speech with these words: "Away with all wrangling and cutting your own throats! One object—one way—one will—and so onward to battle!"

Reaction—at High Water

Imperial officers and their civilian assistants failed in their bold attempt to destroy the Republic at one blow. Reaction now adopted a new method: it wanted to compromise the better-known Republicans and through them the Republic itself. Campaigns of slander, already opened, were continued in aggravated form; fresh campaigns were begun. That I was one of the men who were specially vilified, slandered and—literally—syringed with prussic acid I put to my credit as a recognition of my fight against reaction. Before the dead set on Erzberger began, attempts were made by the most loathsome insinuations to put me out of court politically. Who realizes to-day that I had to defend myself in numerous actions, covering a period of three weeks, against the evidence of bribed witnesses? One of these agents of reaction had forged dozens of letters and telegrams because his patrons intended to accuse me of the shadiest offences and crimes. They tried to involve me in the affairs of private persons and accused me of bribery and favouritism. All this happened after I retired from the Government. Fresh grounds of suspicion were al-

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

ways being added. When I arrived in Kassel to begin my functions as Chief Burgomaster, a German National "rag" welcomed me with these words: "We will put him in the pillory every day." This, however, was not altogether possible; it would have been far too slow a business for the townsfolk, yet they scored a point by plastering the house I lived in with filth, and wrote in huge letters and fast colours all manner of abuse. As every slander and suspicion against me came from the entire reactionary Press, the number of abusive and threatening letters was sometimes enormous. Wherever I went or stood, sat or drove, I was stared at more with oafishness than hatred, and fairly often booed. When I visited Kissingen to tone myself up a little in 1921 I was every day so molested that I gave up going to the spring. Abusive and threatening letters came for me daily. Then came the news of Erzberger's murder. Two or three days after, one of my daughters came to Kissingen, ostensibly because she wanted rest, really to protect me. When the Kissingen working-men, who had heard in the meantime of my being molested, declared they would look after me and "lay out" anyone who annoyed me, I went away. I wanted to spare the town these indignities at all costs.

The feeling against me in and outside Kassel was becoming more and more bitter. The slanders were more ludicrous than ever, but they did their work, especially among young people who knew little of politics.

A Bad Year

1922 was a year of suffering for me. The wretched food during the War and the incessant excitement gradually told upon me. My digestion, as I thought, was out of order, and I could not get it right. The truth was that most of my ill-health was to be attributed to a duodenal ulcer. I yielded

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

to the pressure of the specialists, and on 16th March entered Dr. Schlesinger's private hospital in Berlin. "In four weeks you will probably be all right again." Good Lord! Four weeks in bed! Diet, beef-tea, milk and pudding in homœopathic doses, hot-water bottles, bismuth, belladonna, hypodermic injections in the veins and muscles. What a game! I read a whole library, history, politics, and between whiles high-class literature.

I received visitors every day, and every visit was a pleasure. Besides my own family, came my colleagues from the Sections in the Reichstag and the Diet in great numbers. There were also other callers—business friends, lawyers, doctors and artists. Leopold Jessner was often in my room. Friends came from foreign parts: from Denmark Frau Bang, Kiefer and Stauning; Camille Huysman from Brussels, Ramsay MacDonald from London, and many, many others.

I was seriously ill for four, five and six weeks together, and did not get much better. But the doctor did not advise an operation, which is a risky one. I returned home with full instructions what to do. For weeks two young patriots had been lying in wait for me, considering the quickest way of sending me into a better world. Day after day they followed and watched me without making any move, owing to lack of courage. On Whit-Sunday, when their generous supply of blood money had been spent on drink and women, they attacked me on a walk in the lonely Habichtswald. One was concealed behind a tree with an army revolver in his hand to help his mate with a bullet, in case the prussic acid that the latter was to squirt in my face should fail to take effect.

My daughter Louise, and Hanna, her niece, eight years old, my grandchild, were walking along a quiet path in the forest hand in hand about twenty yards behind me. They saw a

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

man jump out from behind a big tree and rush at me with his right arm raised. My daughter, taking in the situation, shouted out: 'Father, shoot!' and at that moment the fellow I had not heard coming owing to the soft turf stood in front of me, squirting prussic acid into my face from a large ear syringe as big as one's hand. It took effect immediately, though not mortally, because it missed my nose and did not touch my eyes or lips, protected by my moustache. My arms, legs and hands, however, began at once to twitch convulsively. Following immediately my daughter's shout, I seized my Browning, which was at full cock in my right-hand trouser pocket, and as I fell to the ground fired two shots. To-day I remember as clearly as if it had been only a few minutes ago that my object in firing before I fainted was to attract attention. The poison-slinger, as well as the murderer hiding behind the tree, took to their heels directly I fired. Among those who came to my assistance was a doctor, who examined me as I lay unconscious on the ground. He said at once that I had been injured by prussic acid, as the smell of bitter almonds was unmistakable.

The news of the assault gave the papers on the Right an opportunity for indulging in sarcastic comment. The *Deutsche Tageszeitung* jeered at the murderous attack with a clyster pipe. On the Left the facts were sooner understood. The first telegram congratulating me on my escape was from Rathenau, who a few weeks later fell a victim to a better-planned attack. As was ascertained later, the Nationalists' plot was this: the working classes were to be provoked to revolt; this was to be suppressed by the societies of the Right with the help of the Reichswehr; these would have been the saviours of the Fatherland and a popular Dictatorship could have been set up. What would most speedily drive the working classes to revolt?

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

The murder of Scheidemann or Rathenau? I was chosen to be their first victim.

Many years later the two fellows were caught, and each was sentenced by the High Court to ten years' penal servitude. At the trial I stated that I did not want a severe sentence, as the two miscreants were only the victims of the Nationalist Press outcry against me. As a matter of fact, both of them quoted in defence of their attempt the calumnies that had appeared in the papers of the Right. After serving half their sentence they were pardoned at my request. Nervous affections were far more serious than my digestive troubles. The assault subsequently produced ill effects, and I had to go into hospital again towards the end of the year.

The persecution I had been enduring for years naturally did not improve my health, but I did not die of it. The chief organizer of this persecution, however, cannot fail to have on his conscience the death of my dear and unforgettable wife. Fearing I should be upset by the constant stream of abusive and threatening letters, and lying provocative newspaper articles, she would intercept the postman every day without my knowledge, to keep back from me anything that might, she thought, affect my health.

In the summer of 1926 a new abusive "rag" fulminated against me. My wife's nerves were getting worse and worse. One day, when American newspapers with venomous extracts from this paper were delivered at the house, she had a stroke and closed her eyes for ever. This was the greatest political victory that national vilification had ever won over me.

Warnings

During my Mayoralty in my native town of Kassel, which lasted nearly six years, I repeatedly received official warnings

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

of possible attacks from Hamburg, Munich and, above all, from Berlin, with instructions to be on my guard. Definite information reached me of intended attempts by private individuals, as, *e.g.* by a philosophical writer and a Professor of Medicine. In one case a woman was deputed to quench my vital spark; in all other cases it was alleged that students and broken-down officers were concerned. The police were quite aware that I disregarded all these instructions as well as the threatening letters. Permanent police protection was offered me repeatedly, but refused. The Kassel police had got worried about continual reports from outside authorities, and probably also by spiteful articles in the Kassel paper of the Right, for one day they asked me to adopt for my protection a police dog which they sent to my house. They asked me, however, to do more still. To show how careful a Republican Lord Mayor should be in the new Republic, according to the police, so as not to be assassinated by nationalistic ruffians, I will give a list of careful instructions by the police, the observance of which they earnestly, but uselessly, requested me to follow:

1. All windows on the ground floor to be closed at dusk.
2. All windows in the house to be provided with curtains thick enough to prevent the electric light from shining through and to make impossible any observation from outside.
3. To be always unobtrusively accompanied by an acquaintance. Both gentlemen to have their hands on loaded pistols in their pockets. How to defend oneself against assault with fist, dagger, pistol (six lines of instructions follow).
4. Wearing unobtrusively a light armoured waistcoat.
5. To keep away from the shrubs in the Wilhelmshöher Platz, or keep a sharp lookout. . . .

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

Three other points concern measures to be taken by the police.

Is this not a really instructive document from the first five years of the German Republic!

Germany Before Everything

After Rathenau's murder a big political blunder was made by the Parties of the Coalition. There were, however, interesting demonstrations against the Nationalists. There was even a feeble law passed to protect the Republic, that Imperial judges later on increasingly employed against the Left, but the new elections to the Reichstag, warmly advocated by me, were not held. My suggestion was rejected wherever I proposed it. One would have struck while the iron was hot. Just imagine what it would have meant politically if a Reichstag, elected in 1922 till 1926—four long years—could have done anything. A Parliament elected after the murders of Erzberger and Rathenau would have been differently constituted from that elected in 1920, and from the Reichstag of 1924 elected on the lying German National ticket. The year 1922 was followed by the year of the occupation of the Ruhr, with its ruinous inflation under Chancellor Cuno; then came the Hitler "Putsch" and then the Court trials at which Ebert had to fight for his honour.

In many things the Republic's policy was coy and not understandable. I recollect the concessions, already mentioned, made with regard to the Republican flag—black-red-gold. In almost the same finnickish fashion did it approach the question as to how Constitution Day should be celebrated and what songs should be sung. There was no new Republican National Anthem, and not all were sure about adopting the magnificent song of Germany, as the Parties of the Right

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

sang it. The 11th August had been celebrated several times, and dissensions had always arisen. In the summer of 1922 I heard in the lobby of the Reichstag some Republican deputies expressing regrets and misgivings about the Anthem and the songs. I went into the writing-room to write an article for the S.D. Press under the heading, "Germany above Everything." Here it is:

"True love of the Fatherland ever dwelt in those who do not talk about it, but who work to make it fit for all to live in and to assure equal rights for all. The masses stood aside disgruntled, with bitterness in their hearts, because of the revolting inequalities in all states of the Reich. And when the privileged classes, delighted with the measures of the Government that satisfied their demands, sang 'Deutschland über Alles,' the working classes felt themselves mocked at. Hoffmann's magnificent song had a meaning read into it by the swashbucklers for the benefit of the foreigner that is quite as foreign to the song as love of country is to the traitor. It became a song of propaganda, like the Song of Hate against England. As long as millions of the working classes, with political insight, make the Republic secure, they will make still greater sacrifices from pure love of country, set Germany on her feet again and bring her respect and honour. Now, when the Reich is in the direst straits, we will stand at her side in unshakable loyalty and sacrifice. None can have a better right to this Song of the Germans than the working masses of the people who are Democrats and Republicans. If therefore the workers on 11th August, the birthday of the free German Constitution, sing:

*"Deutschland, Deutschland, über Alles,
Über Alles in der Welt . . ."*

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

everyone will know what it means. However dear other lands may be to us, with whom we will live in peace and friendship, whether it is *la belle* France or sunny Italy, we will love our home more than these. And we will build it so that not only every child in this land, but every stranger may feel at home amongst us. Therefore:

*"Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit
Für das deutsche Vaterland!
Danach lasset uns alle streben
Brüderlich mit Herz und Hand!"*

Many agreed with me; many cursed; one swore vengeance; one from Western Germany wrote me the following letter:

"1st August, 1922.

"... In a leading article which I have kept out of our paper you go so far as to think the Song of the Germans suitable for Constitution Day. I have unfortunately been often forced to notice that you are no longer capable of interpreting the spirit of the masses. As the song, 'Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles,' has been sung not only in recent years, but is being sung after own collapse in the War by Nationalists and the People's Party, it has become unpopular in our ranks; just as the black-white-red is now an emblem for the enemies of the Republic, so is the Song of the Germans regarded by these as a challenge to the Republic. I therefore regret your article, and hope it will not be reprinted in any paper. Not only is our cause injured by such false theories, but your own name and position."

My article was copied by numerous S.D. Party papers. Whether Ebert ever saw it, I cannot say. The fact that he

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

made the Song of the Germans the National Anthem is a proof at any rate of our thinking the same on this subject. "Germany before everything."

Alas, the purblind of yesterday and the day before will never comprehend nor understand that these Social Democrats who were abused by the last Hohenzollern Emperor as fellows without a country, and branded by Imperialistic judges in Republican times as traitors to their land, can love their Fatherland from their hearts—before everything in the world.

Can this love of one's own Fatherland be reconciled with the internationalism of Social Democracy? Why do we emphasize our international feelings? Because the Fatherland is of no consequence to us? Because we should like as far as we can to bring all countries of the world into one heaven? No, no, a thousand times. We are international because we know that every nation can only give of its best and highest in social progress, intelligence and knowledge, and distribute these to the whole world, if every nation is guaranteed in every direction by an "International" for her existence, the work of her hands, her trade and her peace. Peace, internationally secured, means the conquest of militarism and an internationally assured social policy—the Eight-Hour Bill, the workers' insurance, the protection of women and children. I enthusiastically agreed with Jean Jaurès when he characterized the idea of a nation in these fine words:

"The nation is the treasure-house of human genius and progress, and it would ill become the Proletariate to destroy the precious vessels of human culture."

Our national mentality is as far apart from the nationalistic mentality of many of our enemies as the heaven is from the earth. With these the word national is synonymous with the lust for power in the Reich and for its supremacy in the world.

THE KAPP-PUTSCH

They have damned Hoffmans's beautiful hymn as tendencious and have convinced the world that Germany aims at ruling over all. "With the German spirit the world will recover." Why have such foolish words contributed to infuriate everybody against Germany? Nationalistic mentality is intolerance, arrogance, a menace which means war, or at any rate preparation for war. National mentality is sincere love of the Fatherland; it is the independence that recognizes all nations and all men as equals; it is the will to give to every country the chance, through international guarantees, of securing everything that is in accordance with its peculiar character and genius, in its highest perfection, and distributing it to the world. For a man who is truly national according to our idea, whether he be German, French, Italian or English, the International is the guardian and protector of the home, to which he is attached with every fibre of his heart and which he loves—above everything in the world.

My Object

I am more convinced than ever that Democratic Socialism is the only way out of this woe and misery into which international Capitalism is driving all nations. It is being more clearly and brutally shown that a few big capitalists are in a position by a stroke of the pen to put hundreds of thousands of working-men into the street. This is in the long run an intolerable state of things, not only for the workers and their families, but also for every State.

As German Social Democracy did not abandon the ground of Democracy in the worst days of 1918 and 1919, it will, in its fight for Socialism, remain loyal to its fundamental idea and bring honour to its name.

Bolshevists, like the Nationalists, scoff at Democracy. They

THE MAKING OF NEW GERMANY

appeal to force and point to the Russia of Lenin-Stalin and the Italy of Mussolini. Such types will always be rejected by Social Democrats. As long as private Capitalism can kick its heel about, Democracy will have its weak spots, but will tower high over the methods of Government in Russia and Italy. The incompleteness of Democracy in our time has never been more wittily characterized than by Anatole France. "Yes, the law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich man and the poor man to beg, to steal bread and to sleep the night under bridges." However true that rings, the essence of Democracy is not defined, for Democracy not only forbids rich and poor to steal bread; but it gives to the rich and poor the same rights of settling the form of Government, the policy and management of the country. The number of rich men compared with that of poor men is ridiculously small. The supremacy of Capital, the representatives of which do not want to sleep under the arches of bridges or to steal bread, is to be shattered; the masses of the poor are only to accept the political rights that Democracy ensures to them.

The object of my political battles was, and is, Democratic Socialism. For this, that will reconcile nations and guarantee the peace of the world, I have struggled in the conviction, which is still unshaken to-day, that its realization for the International Proletariate will be redemption from capitalistic bondage and a preliminary condition of the highest social development for our Fatherland. Democratic Socialism—it will be the road to the freedom and prosperity of a peaceably minded and hard-working German people.

INDEX

- Abdul Aziz, Sultan, i. 160
 Adalbert, Prince, ii. 185
 Adler, Dr. Victor, i. 225, 292*f.*, 323,
 356, 366; ii. 2*f.*, 5, 15, 72*f.*
 Adomeit, ii. 231
 Ahlemann, i. 331
 Ahlwardt, i. 54
 Albarda, i. 112; ii. 15
 Albert, King of the Belgians, ii. 97
 Allgaier, i. 45
 America, visit to, i. 116*ff.*
 Amsterdam, i. 223
 Appenzell, i. 109
 Arco, Count, ii. 305
 Arnim, Lt.-Gen. von, i. 146
 Arons, Dr. Leo, i. 125
 Asquith, H. H. (afterwards Earl of Ox-
 ford and Asquith), English Prime
 Minister, i. 324, 326*f.*, 329; ii. 62
 Auer, E., ii. 302
 Auer, Nazi, i. 66, 102*f.*, 127
 August William, Prince, ii. 185
 Axelrod, i. 356, 365

 Baake, Kurt, ii. 294, 301, 323
 Baden, Prince Max von. *See* Max.
 Bader, Paul, i. 48, 56
 Bakany, ii. 73
 Bâle, International Congress at, i. 104,
 191*f.*, 195
 Ballestrem, President von, i. 137*f.*
 Baltimore, i. 121
 Bang, Frau Nina, ii. 16, 355
 Bartels, Friedrich, i. 281
 Barth, Emil, i. 306; ii. 271, 272, 275
 Barth, Dr. Theodore, i. 154
 Bartling, i. 176, 182
 Bassermann, i. 100, 112, 153*f.*, 237, 240,
 334; ii. 91
 Bauer, Gustavus, i. 283, 361, 367; ii.
 14, 31, 116, 161, 176, 303, 345, 347

 Bavaria, Crown Prince of, i. 246
 Bebel, August, i. 84, 87, 92, 95*ff.*, 127,
 135, 146*ff.*, 152, 159, 173*ff.*, 179*f.*,
 195, 217
 Becker, Jacob, i. 74
 Beckmesser, i. 70
 Beer, Anton, i. 74
 Bell, Johannes, ii. 304, 320
 Berg, von, ii. 43
 Bergen, von, ii. 67, 74, 103, 136
 Berger, von, ii. 332
 Bergsträsser, Dr., i. 307
 Berlin, i. 24, 84*ff.*, 135, 201*f.*, 237; ii.
 1, 333
 Berne, i. 109, 192
 Bernhardi, Gen. von, i. 201, 202
 Bernsdorff, Count, i. 330
 Bernstein, Edward, i. 100, 223, 262,
 266, 278, 291, 313; ii. 268
 Bethmann-Hollweg, Chancellor, i. 158,
 163, 166, 184, 203, 213*f.*, 220, 238,
 274, 275, 287, 296*f.*, 299*f.*, 304,
 324*f.*, 333, 335, 337, 339*f.*, 355; ii.
 18*ff.*, 29*f.*, 42*f.*, 50*f.*, 75, 79
 Bewersdorff, i. 344, 346
 Biegeleben, ii. 56
 Bismarck, Prince Otto E. L. von, i. 24*ff.*,
 70, 164, 173, 243; ii. 192
 Bismarck's table, i. 24*ff.*
 Blankenhorn, i. 213
 Blöcher, M., Swiss Minister, i. 191
 Blücher, Field-Marshal, ii. 144
 Böckh, Lt.-Gen. von der, i. 78, 80
 Bode, ii. 56
 Bœckel, i. 48, 54
 Borchardt, Julian, i. 304
 Borgbjerg, i. 112, 360*ff.*, 366*f.*; ii. 15,
 83, 104
 Böttinger, von, i. 178, 179
 Brammer, i. 343
 Brandau, i. 154

INDEX

- Branting, i. 224, 366; ii. 2, 4*f.*, 15, 46
 Braun, Adolf, ii. 317
 Braun, Otto, i. 84, 209, 222, 273, 285*f.*,
 343; ii. 45, 160, 242, 256*ff.*, 324,
 345
 Brauns, Heinrich, ii. 345
 Brederock, ii. 332, 342
 Bredt, Prof. Dr., i. 4; ii. 18*f.*, 25*f.*, 68*ff.*,
 72, 286
 Breitscheid, Dr., ii. 268, 276
 Brentano, Prof., ii. 48
 Brest-Litowsk, the Peace Resolution and,
 ii. 114, 124
 Briand, Aristide, i. 247, 326*f.*; ii. 112
 Brill, i. 271
 Brockdorff-Rantzau, von, ii. 2, 83*ff.*, 104,
 160, 175, 219, 307
 Brolat, ii. 256, 268
 Bronx, i. 121
 Brooklyn, i. 121
 de Brouckère, i. 112
 Brühne, Frederick, i. 136
 Brunhuber, Dr. Robert, i. 132
 Brüninghaus, Admiral von, ii. 170
 Brunner, Dr. Hugo, i. 7*f.*
 Brunsbüttel, i. 29
 Bryan, William Jennings, U. S. Secre-
 tary of State, i. 193
 Büchmann, ii. 328
 Buffalo, i. 121
 Bülow, Prince Bernhard von, i. 90, 151*f.*,
 155*f.*, 161, 295; ii. 89
 Bunsen, Capt. von, i. 234
 Burg, i. 23
 Burian, von, ii. 73
 Bussche, Major v. d., ii. 99, 105, 114,
 121, 155*f.*, 159, 166*f.*
 Cadorna, General, i. 238
 Caillaux, i. 275
 Calker, von, ii. 28, 29
 Camélinat, M., i. 111, 195
 Capelle, Admiral von, ii. 25, 132, 230
 Capuchin hymn, the, i. 98, 99
 Cecil, Viscount Robert, ii. 62
 Charles, Emperor, i. 333; ii. 207*ff.*
 Charleville, i. 234
 Chelius, Gen. von, ii. 209
 Chemnitz, i. 92
 Chicago, i. 121
 Childhood, i. 1*ff.*
 Clemenceau, Georges Eugène, i. 259,
 348; ii. 314, 317, 322
 Cleveland, i. 121
 Cohen, Prof. Hermann, i. 49
 Cohen, Max, ii. 252*f.*
 Cohn, Dr. Oskar, i. 217, 220; ii. 260
 Colleaux, ii. 133
 Colorado, Count, ii. 74
 Copenhagen, i. 362*f.*; ii. 104
 Créde, i. 7, 11
 Crispin, i. 273
 Czernin, Heinrich, i. 366; ii. 54, 74*f.*
 Dandl, ii. 200, 233
 Däumig, i. 211, 229
 David, Dr. Edward, i. 49, 53, 71, 147,
 213, 217, 234, 276, 279, 310, 311,
 334; ii. 5, 14*ff.*, 19, 22, 28*f.*, 36, 44,
 46*f.*, 60, 159, 195, 302*f.*, 349
 Davidsohn, i. 220
 Debary, ii. 231
 Delbrück, Prof. Hans, i. 335, 353; ii.
 140*ff.*
 Delbrück, i. 213*f.*, 227, 267*f.*, 273, 276,
 283, 294, 310; ii. 235, 238
 Denver, i. 121
 Dernberg, i. 132, 152; ii. 160, 314
 Detroit, i. 121
 Deutelmöser, Major, ii. 175
 Dietrich, i. 176
 Dietz, Heinrich, i. 235, 311
 Dietzsch, Hubert, ii. 136*ff.*
 Dissmann, i. 260
 Dittmann, i. 134, 219*f.*, 278, 288, 289;
 ii. 195
 Dobring, Dr., ii. 231
 Dohna, Count, ii. 47
 Dove, i. 177, 183, 184; ii. 45, 119, 175
 Drews, ii. 201, 238
 Dryander, von, Court Chaplain, ii. 210
 Duisburg, i. 340
 Eastern Front, a tour to the, ii. 81*ff.*
 Ebert, Fritz, i. 84*ff.*, 134, 203, 208, 209*f.*,
 228, 230, 232*ff.*, 256, 258, 260*ff.*,
 273, 283, 285*f.*, 291*f.*, 297, 309*f.*,
 311*f.*, 314, 322, 327, 338, 342, 343*f.*,
 359*f.*, 364, 367; ii. 1, 4, 14, 19*f.*, 23,
 28, 30*f.*, 35, 36, 39, 44*f.*, 47, 55*f.*, 64,

INDEX

- Ebert, Fritz (*contd.*)
 66*f.*, 72*f.*, 85, 101*f.*, 120, 125*ff.*, 129*f.*,
 133, 159, 175, 196, 218*f.*, 224*f.*, 236*f.*,
 252, 256, 258*f.*, 282, 303, 323
- Eckert, i. 42
- Ehrhardt, Franz Joseph, i. 61; ii. 331*f.*
- Eichhorn, General, ii. 81, 288
- Eisner, Kurt, i. 48; ii. 235, 305
- Eitel Frederick, Prince, ii. 224
- Elizabeth, i. 121
- Eltzbacher, Prof., i. 283
- Emmel, i. 278
- Engbjerg, i. 112; ii. 4
- Engels, Friedrich, i. 198, 217
- Ernst, Eugene, i. 286
- Erzberger, Mathias, i. 210, 213, 240,
 246, 254; ii. 24*ff.*, 28, 31*ff.*, 36, 39,
 56, 59*f.*, 64, 69, 73, 105, 119, 134*f.*,
 161, 165, 174*f.*, 226, 304, 314, 353*f.*
- Eulenburg, Count Augustus, ii. 210
- Falkenhausen, ii. 54
- Fehrenbach, Constantine, ii. 28, 32, 55*f.*,
 60, 63, 117*f.*, 130, 133*f.*, 318
- Felden, Dr., i. 208, 309; ii. 255, 265
- Feldmann, Col. von, ii. 293*f.*
- Fiedler, Prof., i. 56*n.*
- Fischbeck, i. 213; ii. 32*f.*, 36, 60, 116,
 118, 135*f.*
- Fischer, Richard, i. 173, 212*f.*, 231, 311,
 312*ff.*; ii. 4, 14
- Fjdroff, Dr., ii. 73
- Fleissner, i. 257, 260, 282
- Foch, Marshal, ii. 205, 222, 233, 266
- Frank, Dr. Ludwig, i. 107, 147, 190,
 192
- Franken, Müller, ii. 320
- Frederick the Great, i. 352
- Frederick II., i. 243
- Frederick III., i. 15
- Freiburg, i. 109
- Freigang, i. 340
- Freytag-Loringhoven, Gen., ii. 101
- Friedberg, Dr., ii. 218
- Friedländer, i. 230
- Fuhrmann, Herr, ii. 119, 151
- Funk, Dr., ii. 28
- Gallwitz, Gen. von, ii. 181
- Gärtner, i. 66
- Gasparri, Cardinal, ii. 70
- Geck, Adolphus, i. 88*f.*, 98
- George, Lloyd, i. 241, 336, 353; ii. 99
- Gerard, i. 335
- Gerisch, A., i. 68*f.*, 74*f.*, 84, 125*f.*, 127*ff.*
- Gerlach, von, i. 54
- Gessler, ii. 345, 350
- Giesberts, Johannes, ii. 304, 307, 345, 660
- Giessen, i. 141
- Giollitti, i. 154, 295
- Gödsche, i. 164
- Goethe, quoted, i. 107, 241*f.*..
- Göhre, i. 213; ii. 252*f.*
- Gotha, i. 307
- Gothain, ii. 27, 36, 59, 160, 304 ,
- Gotthelft Bros., i. 8
- Gottschalk, Dr., i. 107
- Gradnauer, Dr., i. 311; ii. 22
- Greulich, i. 305
- Grey, Sir Edward (now Viscount Grey
 of Fallodon), i. 284, 323, 351
- Grillenberger, Karl, i. 17, 66, 70
- Groeber, i. 268; ii. 45, 152, 161, 175*f.*
- Groener, Gen., ii. 50, 203, 210, 217*f.*,
 234*f.*, 254, 319
- Grogorivici, ii. 73
- Grumbach, i. 111*f.*
- Grünau, von, ii. 233, 244
- Grzesinski, ii. 350
- Guesdes, Jules, i. 190
- Gutfleisch, Dr., i. 62*ff.*
- Haas, Dr. Ludwig, ii. 345
- Haase, Hugo, i. 84, 87, 203*f.*, 211*ff.*,
 217, 219*f.*, 225, 210*ff.*, 256, 267*f.*,
 274, 276*ff.*, 281, 285, 289*ff.*, 295*ff.*,
 299*ff.*; 304*ff.*, 310*f.*, 327; ii. 120*f.*,
 196, 252, 271, 275
- Haefen, Lt.-Col. von, ii. 80, 143*ff.*, 155,
 164, 167*f.*, 173, 200
- Haenisch, Konrad, i. 222; ii. 253
- Hafid, Muley, Sultan, i. 160
- Hagen, Louis von, i. 96
- Hahn, Dr. Dietrich, i. 144
- Hahn, Kurt, ii. 150, 167, 169, 173
- Hallerstein, Dr. Siegmund Freiherr von
 Haller zu, i. 69
- Hamburg, i. 24, 28
- Hammann, i. 84; ii. 90
- Hammerstein, Freiherr von, i. 164, 186

INDEX

- Hannemann, i. 234f.
 Hansen, ii. 196
 Harden, Maximilian, i. 339
 Hardie, Keir, i. 203
 Harnack, ii. 160
 Hartford, i. 121
 Hatzfeld, Prince von, ii. 95f.
 Hauschildt, Richard, i. 77
 Haussmann, Conrad, i. 241, 340; ii. 28, 35, 36, 133, 149, 161ff.
 Heilmann, Ernst, ii. 240
 Heim, Dr., i. 271; ii. 277
 Heine-Dessau, i. 174f.
 Heine, Wolfgang, i. 275; ii. 326
 Heinemann, Dr. Hugo, i. 85, 228
 Heinze, Dr., ii. 318, 341
 Held, ii. 233
 Helfferich, Dr. Karl, i. 246, 333, 334; ii. 25, 29, 32ff., 36, 44f., 47
 Heller, ii. 256, 268
 Helphand, Dr., i. 2, 360f., 365f.; ii. 101f., 105ff., 110, 361
 Henderson, Arthur, i. 157; ii. 127
 Henke, Alfred, ii. 341
 Henry, Prince, of Prussia, i. 12; ii. 230
 Herbst, Alfred, i. 3
 Hergt, i. 100, 330; ii. 170
 Hermann, Konrad, i. 66
 Hertling, Dr. Freiherr von, i. 176, 182; ii. 88, 100, 116, 130, 156
 Herzfeld, i. 217, 220
 Hesse-Nassau, i. 50ff., 71ff.
 Heutsz, Gen., ii. 217
 Heydebrand, Freiherr von, i. 100, 151, 163
 Heye, Gen., ii. 181, 183
 Hilferding, Dr., i. 257, 260
 Hindenburg, Field-Marshal von, i. 331f., 340, 346; ii. 31ff., 35, 69, 79f., 156, 168, 182, 272f., 319, 324
 Hintze, Admiral von, ii. 146, 153f.
 Hirsch, Paul, ii. 315
 Hirschel, i. 54f.
 Hoch, i. 220, 275, 296
 Hödel, i. 10f.
 Hoffmann, Gen., ii. 115, 188
 Hohenlohe-Langenburg, Prince Ernst zu, ii. 149, 160, 173f., 203, 207
 Holstein, Baron von, i. 202
 Holtzendorff, Admiral von, ii. 206
 Hörsing, ii. 339
 Hueber, ii. 3
 Hugo, William, i. 52f.
 Huhn, Heinrich, i. 17ff.
 Hussarek, ii. 153
 Hüttmann, i. 82
 Huysman, Camille, i. 112; ii. 3f., 17, 110ff., 355
 Ide, Dr., i. 6
 Isenburg, Prince, ii. 101
 Italy, i. 294ff.
 Jagow, von, i. 227, 281; ii. 242
 Janson, Wilhelm, i. 223f., 232, 360; ii. 110
 Jaurès, Jean, i. 111, 18f., 195, 203, 211, 259, 275; ii. 36
 Jena, i. 83ff., 103ff.
 Jessner, Leopold, ii. 355
 Joffe, ii. 212
 Joffre, Gen., i. 274
 Johann, Archduke, ii. 264
 John, Paul, i. 61
 Jordan, August, i. 61
 Junck, ii. 32, 60, 160
 Kahl, i. 346
 Kamenew, ii. 211
 Kämpf, i. 177, 183ff., 213f., 267, 276, 294, 321; ii. 45, 55, 60, 62, 66
 Kämpfer, J., i. 2, 76
 Kanitz, i. 100
 Kapp, ii. 333, 335, 341f.
 Kardorff, ii. 160
 Kassel, i. 74ff.; ii. 338, 354, 358
 Katzenbuckel, i. 79
 Katzenstein, Simon, i. 53
 Katzoff, i. 29
 Kautsky, Carl, i. 262, 282, 291, 307
 Keil, William, i. 273; ii. 85
 Kerenski, i. 359; ii. 98, 106
 Kessel, Gen. von, i. 230, 231
 Kiefer, Karl, i. 112; ii. 1
 Kiel, i. 24, 28; ii. 225f.
 Kiental, i. 305
 Kimpel, Lehrer, i. 154
 Kirdorff, E., i. 340
 Klüber, ii. 280
 Knorr, Admiral von, i. 340

INDEX

- Köhler, Philip, i. 54*ff.*, 60
 Kol, van, i. 112; ii. 2, 4, 5
 Körting, B., i. 340
 Krätke, i. 145; ii. 47
 Krause, Dr. von, ii. 161
 Kriege, Dr., ii. 48
 Kube, i. 331
 Kuhl, Gen. von, ii. 142
 Kühlmann, Dr. von, ii. 53*ff.*, 65*f.*, 69, 72*f.*, 76, 99, 102, 115*f.*, 119
 Kühne, Lt.-Gen., ii. 49
 Kuhnert, i. 221
 Kunfy, Dr. ii. 73
 Küster, Dr., i. 234
 Kuttner, Erich, ii. 352
- Lancken, v. d., ii. 209
 Landsberg, i. 137, 325, 326, 346; ii. 85, 159, 275, 303, 307
 Lansing, Robert, ii. 179
 Lassalle, Ferdinand, i. 13, 124, 217, 259
 Lattmann, i. 82
 Lauer, Henry, i. 47
 Laufenberg, Dr., i. 107
 Lauffs, Capt., ii. 137
 Lawrence, i. 121
 Ledebour, i. 107, 138*f.*, 156, 211, 217, 220, 276, 278, 306*f.*, 343, 345; ii. 251, 276, 286, 292
 Legien, Carl, i. 310; ii. 4, 14, 345
 Legros, ii. 133
 Leinert, Robert, i. 260; ii. 307
 Lenin, i. 365; ii. 98, 104, 108, 124, 211
 Lensch, Dr. i. 217
 Léquis, Gen. von, ii. 290
 Lerchenfeld, Count, ii. 63, 66, 200
 Lersner, Freiherr von, ii. 156*f.*, 166
 Lesche, Fritz, i. 41
 Levi, Josef, ii. 49
 Lewald, Dr., i. 273; ii. 166
 Lichnowsky, Prince von, i. 350
 Liebermann, i. 54
 Liebert, Lt.-Gen. von, i. 78
 Liebknecht, Karl, i. 221, 226*f.*, 255, 303, 305
 Liebknecht, William, i. 48, 62, 102, 130*f.*, 170*f.*, 226, 259, 281, 284, 285; ii. 77, 195, 216, 279*ff.*, 288, 293*f.*
 Liesko, Dr., ii. 47
- Lindström. *See* Ludendorff.
 Linsingen, Gen. von, ii. 242, 251, 259
 Loebe, ii. 23, 290, 302, 339, 344*f.*, 348
 Loebell, von, i. 270
 Löhde, Peter, i. 32*f.*
 Lohmann, ii. 151
 Longuet, i. 315
 Lossberg, Gen. von, i. 5
 Lübeck, i. 24
 Ludendorff, Gen., i. 110, 330*ff.*, 340, 346, 353, 357; ii. 1, 29*ff.*, 36, 49, 54, 115, 117, 148*ff.*, 151, 156, 170, 180, 188*f.*, 203*f.*, 342*f.*
 Lüttwitz, Gen. von, ii. 331*ff.*, 339, 342, 347
 Luxberg, Count, i. 340
 Luxemburg, Rosa, i. 85, 100, 107*f.*, 230, 255*f.*, 261, 304; ii. 276, 288, 291*ff.*
 Luzius, Dr., ii. 110
 Lyncker, Freiherr von, ii. 43
- Macchiavelli, ii. 77
 MacDonald, Ramsay, i. 190; ii. 127, 355
 Maltzan, Freiherr von, ii. 101
 Mann, Ritter von, ii. 161, 183, 226
 Mannesmann Brothers, i. 160
 Marburg, i. 46*f.*
 Margorie, i. 203
 Marguérite, Victor, i. 348*f.*
 Marlinière, M. Riccaut de la, 90
 Marloh, Lt.-Commander, ii. 306
 Marne, i. 33*ff.*
 Martov, i. 365
 Marx, Dr., i. 344, 346
 Marx, Karl, i. 197*f.*; ii. 137
 Matuschka, Count, ii. 281*f.*
 Maurice of Hanau, Prince, i. 5
 Max' of Baden, Prince, ii. 144, 146*ff.*, 154*ff.*, 161*ff.*, 171, 175, 181, 183, 196*f.*, 204, 207, 216*ff.*, 234, 237*f.*, 247, 255, 264, 307
 Maxse, Leo, i. 353
 Mehrfeld, i. 256; ii. 345
 Mehring, Dr. Franz, i. 85, 172*f.*, 304
 Meinecke, Prof. Frederick, i. 253
 Meister, Hein, i. 136
 Melchior-Hamburg, Dr., ii. 307
 Merges, ii. 277
 Merkel, Frau, i. 289
 Metger, Prof. Dr., i. 340

INDEX

- Meyer, ii. 32
 Michaelis, Dr., ii. 35*ff.*, 50*f.*, 53*f.*, 63,
 68, 70*f.*, 76, 178
 Milwaukee, i. 121
 Mirbach, Count, ii. 132
 Molkenbuhr, Hermann, i. 84, 190, 195,
 213, 274, 276, 284, 292, 296*f.*, 299,
 309, 322, 359; ii. 14, 44
 Möller, ii. 4
 Morawski, von, i. 213
 Mortur, ii. 73
 Mudra, Gen. von, ii. 181
 Müller, Dr. Adolf, i. 24
 Müller (Fulda), ii. 28
 Müller (Meiningen), ii. 28, 133
 Müller, Dr. August, i. 283
 Müller, Admiral von, ii. 43, 48
 Müller, Hermann, i. 84*f.*, 211; report
 from Paris, 215*f.*, 230, 260, 286, 293,
 308, 359; ii. 5, 14*ff.*, 265, 312, 322
 Müller, Konrad, i. 47
 Mumm, von, ii. 188
 Mussolini, Benito, i. 260
- Naumann, Frederick, i. 54; ii. 80
 Naumann, Dr. Victor, ii. 73*f.*, 160
 Neuring, ii. 280
 New Britain, i. 121
 New Haven, i. 121
 New York, i. 116, 121
 Newark, i. 121
 Nicolai, Col., ii. 117, 170
 Niehus, i. 42
 Nielsen, I. P., i. 112
 Nobiling, Dr., i. 10*ff.*
 Noeggerat, i. 335
 Noske, ii. 159, 197, 290, 301, 303, 327,
 330, 344
 Nowack, Fr. W., ii. 258
 Nuremberg, work in, i. 69*f.*
- Oberbreyer, Max, ii. 77
 Oehme, Heinrich, i. 66
 Oertel, Karl, i. 66
 Oerter, Sepp, ii. 49
 Oetker, Dr. Friedrich, i. 45
 Offenbach, i. 71*ff.*
 O'Grady (now Sir), James, i. 190
 Old Kassel, i. 1
 Oldenburg-Januschau, i. 270
- Oldershausen, Gen. von, ii. 332
 Oncken, Prof. Hermann, i. 253
 Oppen, von, i. 342
 Osel, ii. 277
 Ostini, Lt.-Col. von, ii. 49
 Oven, Gen. von, ii. 339
- Paasche, Dr., i. 138, 174*ff.*, 184; ii. 45
 Pacelli, Papal Nuncio, ii. 50*ff.*, 68,
 70
 Pannekook, Prof. Dr., i. 107, 226
 Papst, ii. 332
 Parents, author's, i. 3*f.*
 Paris, i. 188; Hermann Müller's report
 from, 215*f.*
 Paris, election celebrations in, i. 188*f.*
 Parvus (Helphand), i. 2, 361
 Passug, death of Bebel in, i. 99
 Paterson, i. 121
 Payer, Frederick von, i. 237, 338, 346; ii.
 28, 32*ff.*, 36, 39, 55, 59, 63, 65, 130,
 155, 157, 160*f.*, 172, 201, 215, 347
 Pernerstorffer, Engelbert, i. 72*f.*, 111*f.*,
 190
 Petzoldt, i. 340
 Pfannkuch, William, i. 10, 17*f.*, 42, 61,
 68, 127, 291; ii. 302
 Pfleger, Dr., i. 242, 244
 Pfötschler, Hans, i. 70
 Pfülz, Antonie, ii.
 Philadelphia, i. 121
 Pichon, i. 259
 Pickenbach, i. 54
 Pittsburgh, i. 121
 Plessen, Major-Gen. von, ii. 254
 Pohl, ii. 110
 Poincaré, ii. 112
 Pope, the, and Note on Peace, ii. 50*ff.*,
 178
 Posadowsky, Count, i. 137, 141; ii.
 303
 Pourtales, Count, i. 233
 Preuss, Hugo, ii. 304*f.*
 Providence (R. I.), i. 121
- Quarck, Dr. Max, i. 61; ii. 347
 Quessel, ii. 348
- Radbruch, Prof., i. 346
 Radek, Carl, i. 283; ii. 113, 132, 211

INDEX

- Rathenau, Walther, i. 335; ii. 183, 357, 359
 Rauscher, Ulrich, ii. 301, 345
 Rechenberg, ii. 160
 Reinhardt, Col., ii. 325, 331, 340
 Reissner, Carl, i. 241
 Rénaudet, Pierre, i. 195, 215, 324, 328
 Renner, Dr., i. 190, 366
 Rettich, i. 141
 Reuss, Prince, ii. 49
 Reventlow, i. 318
 Rheinbaben, Rochus von, i. 240, 244, 247; ii. 281
 Richter, Eugene, i. 60, 63, 170, 269, 273
 Richtofen, von, ii. 28, 32
 Rickelt, Gustavus, ii. 286
 Ricklin, ii. 196
 Rietzler, ii. 105, 110, 131
 Roberts, Lord, i. 150, 154
 Rochester, i. 121
 Roedern, Count von, ii. 120, 161, 226f.
 Romanshorn, i. 109
 Romberg, von, ii. 185
 Ronikier, Count, ii. 128
 Rosenberg, ii. 160
 Rothart, i. 344
 Rucklin, ii. 161
 Rüddinghausen, i. 52
 Rühle, ii. 291
 Rupprecht of Bavaria, Prince, ii. 147

 Sabin, i. 130
 Sachs, Hans, i. 70
 St. Gallen, i. 109
 St. Louis, i. 121
 St. Paul, i. 121
 Salandra, i. 295
 Salm-Hortsmar, Prince Otto zu, i. 176, 182, 340
 Sassenbach, ii. 4, 14
 Sauberzweig, Gen., ii. 81
 Schäfer, Prof. Dietrich, i. 242, 244, 318, 352
 Schäfer, Prof. Frederick, i. 253
 Schaffhausen, i. 109
 Scheele, i. 213
 Scheer, Admiral von, ii. 132, 232f.
 Scheidemann, Henry, i. 3
 Scheidemann, Jordan, i. 3
 Scheidemann, Ludwig, i. 4
 Scheidemann, Rheinhold, i. 3
 Scheidemann, Stephen, i. 3
 Schenectady, i. 121
 Schenkeli, i. 225
 Scheuch, Gen., ii. 182, 226, 233, 243
 Schiffer, Dr., i. 346; ii. 28, 304, 318
 Schiller, Prof., i. 53, 95
 Schlicke, ii. 317
 Schmidt, Robert, i. 294, 299, 310; ii. 195, 303
 Schöler, Lt.-Gen. von, ii. 336
 Scholz, Dr., i. 100
 Schönaich-Carolath, Prince von, i. 174, 178f., 213
 Schönlanck, Dr. Bruno, i. 61
 Schöpflin, i. 213, 234
 Schücking, Prof., ii. 307
 Schulenburg von, ii. 272
 Schultz-Bromberg, i. 213; ii. 318
 Schulz, Heinrich, i. 85, 256
 Schulze, i. 47
 Schumacher, Prof. Hermann, i. 125, 129ff., 253
 Schwander, Dr., ii. 160, 334
 Schwerdtfeger, Col., ii. 142
 Schwerin, Count, i. 182
 Seeberg, Prof. Reinhardt, i. 253
 Segitz, i. 66
 Seitz, Frau, i. 293, 366
 Sembat, i. 195, 322; ii. 112
 Severing, i. 260
 Seyda, i. 267f.
 Shakespeare, quoted, i. 245
 Sieveking, ii. 56
 Simons, Dr., ii. 160, 218, 227, 236, 254f.
 Singer, Paul, i. 84, 135, 147f.
 Sinowjew, ii. 211
 Skaret, Ferdinand, ii. 73
 Skavenius, ii. 2f.
 Smuts, Gen., ii. 144
 Soden, ii. 48
 Solf, Dr., ii. 116f., 160, 164, 173, 190ff., 206, 210, 243
 Solingen, i. 123f., 290f.
 Sollmann, ii. 273
 Sonnenberg, Liebermann von, i. 151f.
 Sonnino, ii. 51
 Spahn, Dr., i. 174ff., 237, 335; ii. 28
 Spiro, ii. 281

INDEX

- Springfield, i. 121
 Springorum, Lord-Lieutenant, ii. 335
 Stadthagen, Arthur, i. 85, 227, 273
 Stampfer, i. 192, 204f., 207f.; ii. 159
 Starkenburg, i. 71
 Stauning, i. 112, 359, 364, 366; ii. 1ff., 5, 16, 104f., 112
 Staunton, i. 121
 Stein, Dr. August, ii. 31, 73, 90
 Stein, Freiherr von, ii. 161
 Stein, Prof. Ludwig, ii. 89f.
 Stengel, Prof., i. 45
 Stettin, i. 24
 Stickloff, i. 225
 Stinnes, Hugo, i. 359
 Stöcker, i. 164, 340
 Stockholm, ii. 1ff.
 Stockholm Memorandum, 6ff.
 Stöhr, i. 331
 Stolten, Otto, i. 219; ii. 132
 Stoltze, Frederick, i. 72, 98
 Stresemann, Dr., i. 159, 240ff., 244, 254, 347, 359; ii. 27, 55f., 63, 114, 145, 167, 183, 196, 302f.
 Ströbel, i. 204
 Stucklein, Dr., i. 222
 Stücklen, Daniel, i. 141f.
 Stumm, Freiherr von, i. 164; ii. 281f.
 Stuttgart, ii. 338ff.
 Stychel, ii. 196
 Südekum, Dr., i. 66f., 213, 223f.; ii. 28, 136, 276
 Sweden, ii. 104ff.
 Swing, i. 335
 Switzerland, i. 109
 Sydow, ii. 47
 Tatjana, Margarete, i. 364f.
 Temsytsky, ii. 73
 Thiele, Ad., ii. 318
 Thomas, Albert, i. 195; ii. 1f., 112
 Timm, Johannes, i. 262
 Tirpitz, Admiral von, ii. 79
 Tittoni, ii. 73
 Töpfer, Dr., ii. 2
 Träger, Albert, i. 174
 Traub, Pfarrer, i. 352; ii. 242
 Treitschke, Heinrich von, i. 201
 Treutler, von, ii. 200
 Trimborn, ii. 161, 201
 Troelstra, i. 112, 203, 255f., 292f.; ii. 2, 4f., 104, 126f., 133
 Trotha, Admiral von, ii. 332
 Trotsky, ii. 98, 108, 124
 Tscheidse, i. 359
 Tschirschky, von, i. 349
 Tuma, Dr., ii. 73
 Ulrich, i. 7ff.
 Vaillant, Edward, i. 111, 190, 195, 259, 260
 Valentine, von, ii. 42f.
 Vandervelde, i. 112, 203, 322, 327
 Versailles, Treaty of, ii. 307ff.
 Vibaut, i. 111
 Victor, Carl, i. 2
 Vienna, i. 323
 Vietsch, Capt. Hauptmann von, i. 229f.
 Vitnös, ii. 4, 15
 Viviani, i. 259
 Vliegen, i. 223f.
 Vogel, Hans, ii. 317
 Vogtherr, ii. 251, 260
 Voigt, ii. 317
 Vollmar, von, i. 68, 97, 102, 146
 Wabersky, Gustavus, i. 203, 213, 227, 230, 269, 276f., 283, 310, 322, 341f., 360; ii. 1, 19, 32, 35, 36, 45, 174, 218
 Waldow, von, ii. 208, 266
 Waldstein, Dr., ii. 135
 Wallraff, ii. 116f., 120f.
 Warburg, ii. 163, 167
 Wasser, Frau, i. 289
 Wedel, von, ii. 70
 Weimar, ii. 301f.
 Weller, i. 12
 Wels, i. 213, 217, 228, 310; ii. 288ff., 326
 Werner-Hersfeld, i. 54
 Westarp, Count, i. 100, 213, 242, 244, 340, 352, 359f.; ii. 29, 55f., 64f., 100, 114, 145, 168, 183
 Westmayer, i. 66
 Wibaut, i. 328
 Wiemer, Otto, i. 65, 213; ii. 56
 Wiemer, Philip, i. 65
 Wiesner, Max, ii. 158
 William I, i. 10; ii. 48

INDEX

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>William II, i. 7, 14, 184, 209; ii. 20, 31f., 42ff., 72, 96f., 154, 161, 192f., 199f., 233ff., 278f.</p> <p>William, Crown Prince, i. 12; ii. 42f.</p> <p>Wilson, Woodrow, i. 296, 333, 353; ii. 155; first note of, 176ff., second, 184ff., third, 189ff., latest, 197f., new, 221f., 307</p> <p>Winterthur, i. 109</p> <p>Wirth, Dr., i. 309; ii. 323, 328</p> <p>Wissel, Rudolf, ii. 85</p> <p>Witte, i. 301</p> <p>Witting, Dr., i. 339</p> <p>Wolff, Theodore, ii. 148</p> <p>Worowsky, ii. 105ff., 110</p> | <p>Woyrsch, Gen. von, ii. 117</p> <p>Wurm, i. 278</p> <p>Würzburg, ii. 85</p>
<p>Zankor, ii. 73</p> <p>Zappay, Henry, i. 43</p> <p>Zedlitz-Truttschler, Freiherr von, i. 84</p> <p>Zetkin, Clara, i. 229, 235, 255</p> <p>Zietz, Louise, i. 84, 239, 285</p> <p>Zimmermann, i. 241, 276, 332ff., 360, 366; ii. 1, 3, 19f., 48, 140</p> <p>Zimmerwald, i. 305</p> <p>Zubeil, i. 144</p> <p>Zürich, i. 109</p> <p>Zwenger, Franz, i. 45</p> |
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